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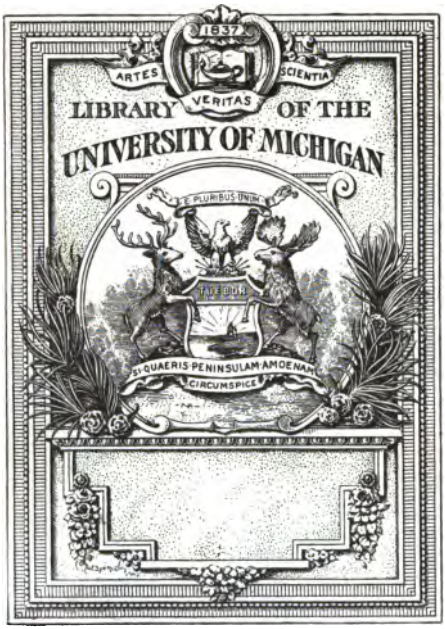
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NOTES AND ADDITIONS

TO DR. HARTLEY'S

OBSERVATIONS ON MAN;

107859

BY HERMAN ANDREW PISTORIUS,
RECTOR OF POSERITZ IN THE ISLAND OF RUGEN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN ORIGINAL, PRINTED AT ROSTOCK AND LEIPSIG IN MDCCLXXII:

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A SKETCH

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BOOKSELLER'S ADVERTISEMENT.

THE firſt two volumes of this publication contain Dr. Hartley's work entire, as publiſhed by himſelf in the year 1749, without any alterations or additions.

The third conſiſts of notes and additions to the ſecond volume by a learned German, Mr. Piſtorius, which are here faithfully rendered into Engliſh, and have been added by the advice of ſome literary friends, who are well acquainted with the author's work, and thought they would form a valuable addition to it. A ſketch of the life and character of Dr. Hartley, written by his ſon David Hartley, Eſq. And a general index.

*** A Print of the author, engraved by Blake, in quarto, may be had of the publiſher, price two ſhillings and ſix-pence.

A NOTE *to the ſecond paragraph in p.* 98, *Vol.* I.

Dr. Johnſtone, in his *Eſſay on the ganglions of the nerves*, has endeavoured to ſhew that they are the ſources of all the nerves which go to organs that are ſtrictly *automatic*, as the heart, &c. and the checks or cauſes that hinder our volitions from extending to them.

The ganglions (ſays he), reſpecting their ſtructure, may juſtly be conſidered as little brains, or germs of the nerves detached from them, conſiſting of a mixture of cortical and nervous medullary ſubſtance, nouriſhed by ſeveral ſmall blood-veſſels, in which various nervous filaments are collected, and in them loſe their rectilinear parallel direction, ſo that a new nervous organization probably takes place in them.

Reſpecting their uſes, ganglions ſeem the ſources, or immediate origins, of the nerves ſent to organs moved involuntarily, and probably the check or cauſe which hinders our volitions from extending to them.

Ganglions ſeem analogous to the brain in their office, ſubordinate ſprings and reſervoirs of nervous power; they ſeem capable of diſpenſing it long after all communication with the brain is cut off. And though they ultimately depend on the brain for its emanations, it appears from facts that that dependance is far from being immediate and inſtantaneous.

From the ganglions ſerving as ſubordinate brains, it is that the vital organs derive their nervous power, and continue to move during ſleep, &c.

In a word, ganglions limit the exerciſe of the mind's authority in the animal œconomy, and put it out of our power by a ſingle volition to ſtop the motions of our heart, and in one capricious moment irrevocably to end our lives.

A SKETCH

OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF

Dr. HARTLEY.

DOCTOR DAVID HARTLEY was born on the 30th of Auguſt, 1705. He was the ſon of a very worthy and reſpectable clergyman, vicar of Armley, in the county of York. He received the firſt rudiments of inſtruction at a private ſchool, and his academical education at Cambridge. He was admitted at Jeſus' College at the age of fifteen years, and was afterwards elected a fellow of that ſociety. He was originally intended for the church, and proceeded for ſome time in his thoughts and ſtudies towards that object: but upon a

cloſer conſideration of the conditions attached to the clerical profeſſion, he was reſtrained by ſome ſcruples which made him reluctant to ſubſcribe the thirty-nine articles. In conſequence of theſe ſcruples he became diſqualified for the purſuit of his firſt plan of devoting himſelf to the perſonal functions and ſervice of the church. However he ſtill continued to the end of his life a well affected member of the church of England, approving of its practical doctrines and conforming to its public worſhip. As the church of England maintains all the uſeful and practical doctrines of Chriſtian morality, he did not think it neceſſary to ſeparate himſelf from its communion on account of ſome conteſted articles of ſpeculative and abſtruſe opinion. He was a Catholic Chriſtian in the moſt extenſive and liberal ſenſe of that term. On the ſubject of religious controverſy he has left the following teſtimony of his ſentiments, in the laſt ſection of propoſition eighty-eight *on Religious Knowledge*; viz. "The great difference of opinion and contentions which happen on religious matters are plainly owing to the violence of men's paſſions more than to any other cauſe. When religion

" ligion has had its due effect in reſtraining " theſe, and begetting true candour, we may " expect a unity of opinion both in religious " and other matters, as far as is neceſſary " for uſeful and practical purpoſes."

Though his talents were very general, yet undoubtedly his pre-eminent faculties were formed for the moral and religious ſciences. Theſe talents diſplayed themſelves in the earlieſt parts of life with ſo much diſtinction, as could not fail to hold out to his ambition a future career of honeſt fame, in the ſervice of the national church, if he could have complied with the conditions, conſiſtently with the ſatisfaction of his own mind. But he had at all times a moſt ſcrupulous and diſintereſted mind, which diſpoſed him in every part of his life, and under all circumſtances, to adhere firmly to thoſe principles which appeared to him to form the ſtrict and conſcientious line of moral duty. It proceeded therefore from the moſt ſerious ſcruples, irreſiſtibly impreſſed upon his mind, that he relinquiſhed the profeſſion of his firſt choice, which may properly be called the prerogative profeſſion of moral and religious philoſophy.

In conſequence of this determination he applied his talents and ſtudies to the medical profeſſion, in which he ſoon became equally and in the firſt degree eminent for ſkill, integrity, and charitable compaſſion. His mind was formed to benevolence and univerſal philanthropy. He exerciſed the healing art with anxious and equal fidelity to the poor and to the rich. He viſited, with affectionate ſympathy, the humbleſt receſſes of poverty and ſickneſs, as well as the ſtately beds of pampered diſtemper and premature decrepitude. His manners were gentle; his countenance affable; his eloquence moral and pathetic, not harſh or importunate; yet he was not unmindful that bodily ſickneſs ſoftens the mind to moral ſenſibilities, which afforded frequent opportunities to him of exerciſing mental charities to afflicted minds, whilſt he employed the powers of medical ſcience to the reſtoration of bodily health. He thus united all the talents of his own mind for natural and moral ſcience, conformably to thoſe doctrines which he inculcates, to that univerſal ſyſtem of final morality, by which each effort of ſenſation or ſcience in the va-

rious

rious gradations of life muſt be eſteemed defective, until it ſhall have attained to its correſponding moral conſummation.

It aroſe from the union above mentioned, of talents in the moral ſcience with natural philoſophy, and particularly from the profeſſional knowledge of the human frame, that Dr. Hartley was enabled to bring into one view the various arguments for his extenſive ſyſtem, from the firſt rudiments of ſenſation through the maze of complex affections and paſſions in the path of life, to the final, moral end of man.

He was induſtrious and indefatigable in the purſuit of all collateral branches of knowledge, and lived in perſonal intimacy with the learned men of his age. Dr. Law, Dr. Butler, Dr. Warburton, afterwards biſhops of Carliſle, Durham, and Glouceſter, and Dr. Jortin, were his intimate friends and fellow labourers in moral and religious philoſophy, in metaphyſics, in divinity and eccleſiaſtical hiſtory. He was much attached to the highly reſpected character of Dr. Hoadley, biſhop of Wincheſter, for the liberality of his opinions, both in church and ſtate, and for the freedom

freedom of his religious ſentiments. Dr. Hales, and Dr. Smith maſter of Trinity College in Cambridge, with other members of the Royal Society, were his companions in the ſciences of optics, ſtaticks, and other branches of natural philoſophy. Mr. Hawkins Browne, the author of an elegant Latin poem, *De Animi Immortalitate*, and Dr. Young, the moral poet, ſtood high in his eſteem. Dr. Byrom, the inventor of a ſcientific ſhort-hand writing, was much reſpected by him for uſeful and accurate judgment in the branch of philology. Mr. Hooke, the Roman hiſtorian and diſciple of the Newtonian chronology, was amongſt his literary intimates.

The celebrated poet Mr. Pope was likewiſe admired by him, not only as a man of genius, but alſo as a moral poet. Yet, as Dr. Hartley was a zealous Chriſtian without guile, and (if the phraſe may be admitted) a partizan for the Chriſtian religion, he felt ſome jealouſy of the rivalſhip of human philoſophy, and regarded the Eſſay on Man, by Mr. Pope, as tending to inſinuate that the divine revelation of the Chriſtian religion was ſuperfluous, in a caſe where human philoſophy

loſophy was adequate. He ſuſpected the ſecret influence of Lord Bolingbroke as guiding the poetical pen of his unſuſpecting friend, to deck out in borrowed plumes the plagiariſms of modern ethics from Chriſtian doctrines*; not without farther diſtruſt of the inſidious effect of poetic licence, in ſoftening ſome rugged points of unaccommodating moral truths. It was againſt this principle that his jealouſy was directed. His heart, from conſcious ſympathy of human infirmities, was totally devoid of religious pride. His only anxiety was to preſerve the rule of life inviolate, becauſe he deemed errors of human frailty leſs injurious to the moral cauſe, than ſyſtematical perverſions of its principle.

It was in the ſociety and friendly intercourſe of the learned men above-mentioned, and many others, that Dr. Hartley arranged his work, and brought it to a concluſion. His genius was penetrating and active; his induſtry indefatigable; his philoſophical obſervations and attentions unremitting. From his earlieſt youth he was devoted to the ſciences; particularly to logic and mathematics. He ſtudied mathematics, together with

with natural and experimental philoſophy, under the celebrated profeſſor Saunderſon. He was an enthuſiaſtic admirer and diſciple of Sir Iſaac Newton in every branch of literature and philoſophy, natural and experimental, mathematical, hiſtorical and religious, which that immortal man diffuſed throughout the world. He received his firſt principles of logic and metaphyſics from the works of that good and great philoſopher Locke. He took the firſt rudiments of his own work from Sir Iſaac Newton and Mr. Locke: the doctrine of vibrations, as inſtrumental to ſenſation and motion, from the former, and the principle of aſſociation originally from the latter, farther explained in a diſſertation by the Rev. Mr. Gay; as he himſelf has informed us. His work was begun when he was about twenty-five years of age; which is a very early period for deep and comprehenſive reſearches. And yet it remains upon his own authority, as declared by himſelf to his private friends and connexions, that the ſeeds of this work were lying in latent germination for ſome years antecedent even to that early bud, which in the work itſelf has diſplayed, in full maturity, the mechanical, rational, and moral

moral ſyſtem of man, reſpecting his frame, his duty, and his expectations.

Dr. Hartley's work was publiſhed in the beginning of the year 1749, when he was a little more than forty-three years of age. It had been completed and finiſhed about two or three years before. He did not expect that it would meet with any general or immediate reception in the philoſophical world, or even that it would be much read or underſtood; neither did it happen otherwiſe than as he had expected. But at the ſame time he did entertain an expectation that, at ſome diſtant period, it would become the adopted ſyſtem of future philoſophers. That period ſeems now to be approaching.

He lived about nine years after the publication of his work. The labour of digeſting the whole ſyſtem, and of the compoſition, was exceedingly great and conſtant upon his mind for many years, as may eaſily be ſuppoſed from the very great ſcope of learning which it embraces. But after the completion and publication of it, his mind was left in perfect repoſe. He kept a general and vigilant attention upon the work, to receive

receive and to conſider any ſubſequent thoughts which might have occurred from his own reflections, or from the ſuggeſtions of others, by which he might have modified or arranged any incongruous or diſcordant parts. But no ſuch alterations or modifications ſeem to have occurred to him: and at his death he left his original work untouched, without addition or diminution, without alteration or comment. He has left no additional paper on the ſubject whatſoever.

The learned and ingenious Dr. Prieſtley publiſhed in the year 1775 ſome parts of Dr. Hartley's works in an octavo volume, entitled, *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind on the Principle of the Aſſociation of Ideas, with Eſſays on the Subject of it.* Dr. Prieſtley had commenced a correſpondence with the author a ſhort time before his death, and has in ſubſequent literary works commented with great acuteneſs and erudition upon his metaphyſical and moral ſyſtem.

The ſyſtem is in itſelf ſo extenſive, and was, at the time of its publication, ſo entirely novel and original, that the author did not appear diſpoſed to multiply his anxieties for

for the particular fate of each tenet or doctrine; but he bequeathed the whole, as one compact and undivided ſyſtem, to the candour and mature judgment of time and poſterity. There was but one point in which he appeared anxious to prevent any miſapprehenſion of his principles: that point reſpected the immateriality of the ſoul. He was apprehenſive leſt the doctrine of corporeal vibrations, being inſtrumental to ſenſation, ſhould be deemed unfavourable to the opinion of the immateriality of the ſoul. He was therefore anxious to declare, and to have it underſtood, that he was not a materialiſt. He has not preſumed to declare any ſentiment reſpecting the nature of the ſoul, but the negative one, that it cannot be material according to any idea or definition that we can form of matter. He has given the following definition of matter, viz. "That it is a mere paſſive thing, of whoſe "very eſſence it is to be endued with a *vis* "*inertiæ*; for this *vis inertiæ* preſents itſelf "immediately in all our obſervations and "experiments upon it, and is inſeparable "from it, even in idea." The materiality therefore of the ſenſitive ſoul is precluded, by the definition of matter being incapable of

The whole of this definition is wrong, as future experiments in Chemistry has demonstrated.

of ſenſation. If there be any other element capable of ſenſation, the ſoul may conſiſt of that element; but that is a new ſuppoſition, ſtill leaving the original queſtion concluded in the negative, by the fundamental definition of matter. If indeed we could ſuppoſe that matter may have ſome occult powers and properties, different and ſuperior to thoſe which appear to us, ſo that it might be endued with the moſt ſimple kinds of ſenſation, it might then attain, according to the demonſtrations of the author's theory, to all that intelligence of which the human mind is poſſeſſed; that is to ſay, through all the paths of ſenſation, imagination, ambition, ſelf-intereſt, ſympathy and theopathy, finally to the moral ſenſe. And if to the moral ſenſe, whatever may be the origin of the ſoul by divine creation, whether material or immaterial, tranſitory or deſtined to immortality, it is a moral eſſence, the nobleſt work of God.

The philoſophical character of Dr. Hartley is delineated in his works. The features of his private and perſonal character were of the ſame complexion. It may with peculiar propriety be ſaid of him, that the mind was the man. His thoughts were not immerſed in

in worldly purſuits or contentions, and therefore his life was not eventful or turbulent, but placid and undiſturbed by paſſion or violent ambition. From his earlieſt youth his mental ambition was pre-occupied by purſuits of ſcience. His hours of amuſement were likewiſe beſtowed upon objects of taſte and ſentiment. Muſic, poetry, and hiſtory were his favourite recreations. His imagination was fertile and correct, his language and expreſſion fluent and forcible. His natural temper was gay, cheerful, and ſociable. He was addicted to no vice in any part of his life, neither to pride, nor to ſenſuality, nor intemperance, nor oſtentation, nor envy, nor to any ſordid ſelf-intereſt: but his heart was replete with every contrary virtue. The virtuous principles which are inſtilled in his works were the invariable and decided principles of his life and conduct.

His perſon was of the middle ſize and well proportioned. His complexion fair, his features regular and handſome. His countenance open, ingenuous and animated. He was peculiarly neat in his perſon and attire. He was an early riſer, and punctual in the

employments of the day; methodical in the order and diſpoſition of his library, papers and writings, as the companions of his thoughts, but without any pedantry, either in theſe habits, or in any other part of his character. His behaviour was polite, eaſy, and graceful; but that which made his addreſs peculiarly engaging, was the benevolence of heart from which that politeneſs flowed. He never converſed with a fellow-creature without feeling a wiſh to do him good. He conſidered the moral end of our creation to conſiſt in the performance of the duties of life attached to each particular ſtation, to which all other conſiderations ought to be inferior and ſubordinate, and conſequently that the rule of life conſiſts in training and adapting our faculties, through the means of moral habits and aſſociations, to that end. In this he was the faithful diſciple of his own theory, and by the obſervance of it he avoided the tumult of worldly vanities and their diſquietudes, and preſerved his mind in ſerenity and vigour, to perform the duties of life with fidelity, and without diſtraction. His whole character was eminently and uniformly marked by Sincerity of heart, Simplicity of manners, and manly

Innocence

Innocence of mind. He died at Bath on the 28th of Auguſt, 1757, at the age of fifty-two years.

He was twice married, and has left iſſue by both marriages now living:

From whom this memorial teſtimony is the tribute of Truth, Piety, and Affection.

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NOTES AND ADDITIONS

To Dr. HARTLEY's

OBSERVATIONS ON MAN.

BY HERMAN ANDREW PISTORIUS,

Rector of Poseritz in the Island of Rugen.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN EDITION, PRINTED AT ROSTOCK AND LEIPSIG, 1772.

EXTRACT FROM Mr. PISTORIUS's PREFACE.

"I FOUND, that of the two volumes of Dr. Hartley's work in English, the first of which contains a complete physiological and psychological system, the second only was properly fit for my purpose: this contains natural religion, a demonstration of christianity, its moral doctrines, a short exhibition of the doctrines of faith, and finally a treatise on the expectations of man. I therefore contented myself with giving a short though sufficient abstract of the first volume, which contains the association of ideas; but the second I have thought it necessary to divide into two, and amplify it with my own observations." These observations are here translated entire, and are to be considered as additions to the introduction and the propositions in the second part to which they refer.

NOTES AND ADDITIONS.

INTRODUCTION, p. i.

On Neceſſity.

WHEN the reader reflects, that this treatiſe on religion is the ſecond part of a work in which Hartley conſiders the nature of man, and treats the mind and body altogether as machines, he will probably take it up with miſtruſt and prejudice, and condemn it as irrational, without an examination. A certain free-will, of which indeed very different, and, in ſome meaſure, very erroneous ideas have been formed, but with which, in the opinion of moſt philoſophers and divines, neceſſity and the mechaniſm of the human mind are incompatible, has uſually been conſidered as abſolutely requiſite to religion and morality. The ſuppoſition, that both muſt fall to the ground, if the human ſoul be ſubjected to corporeal or ſpiritual mechaniſm, has been ſupported both by the friends and by the opponents of religion: the former conſidering as an enemy to religion every one who defends the doctrine of mechaniſm, and the latter having attacked religion and morality with the principle of neceſſity. Hence Hartley's endeavour, not merely to ſhew the accordance of mechaniſm with religion, but even to build all religion on the doctrine

trine of neceſſity, is a new and unheard of attempt, in which reſpects it deſerves the attention of the learned. The chain of his reflections, and the developement of his ſyſtem, will remove from the mind of every thinking and impartial reader, that miſtruſt which may ariſe from the prejudice of commonly received opinions: we will however premiſe a few general obſervations in defence of his theory.

The end of morality and religion is, unqueſtionably, the happineſs of mankind. Man is endued with the power of being rationally virtuous, and is made capable of religion, that through the exerciſe of this power and this capability he may attain that happineſs which is appointed for him, and of which he is ſuſceptible. All that we have to inquire, therefore, is; can man, conſidered as a rational, moral, and religious being, be happy, if his moral and religious notions, perceptions, and actions be ſubject to mechaniſm? or do mechaniſm and happineſs reciprocally exclude each other? That neceſſity is not incompatible with happineſs and virtue, is clear, as has been already obſerved by others, from this principle, that, if it were, God could neither be virtuous nor happy, ſince he is both from neceſſity. Of happineſs we know nothing, but that it conſiſts in a chain of agreeable ſenſations, or that it is a ſtate which man rather wills, than wills not. By mechaniſm we underſtand a power of effecting or ſuffering ſuch changes as are dependent on each other, by that neceſſary connection which we diſcover in all nature, as cauſe and effect, and which are united to and follow each other according to certain eſtabliſhed laws. If the human mind be ſubject to ſuch a mechaniſm, all its actions and ſufferings, its perceptions and ideas, its deſires, inclinations, and paſſions muſt be conſequences of a neceſſary connection; and ſo founded on each other, that, according to one or more ſimple invariable laws, they will follow one

another in such a manner as to exclude every thing arbitrary, fortuitous, arising from no motive, or aiming at no end. Compare these two definitions, of happiness and mechanism, and shew, that they are incompatible with each other. If you cannot do this, and prove that man is incapable of all agreeable sensations or their consequences, when there are sufficient grounds for them, and that content and happiness, when mechanically produced, are no longer content and happiness to him, mechanism and religion cannot be proved to be contradictory.

It may be said, if religion may make a man happy on the principles of necessity, still on those principles it cannot render him virtuous, or an object of divine bliss and reward. To begin with the latter: that man if necessarily good is not an object of reward. Is reward, then, essentially different from content and happiness? Assuredly no otherwise than as it is a certain determinate happiness, connected with and consequent to a certain virtuous, or suitable conduct, call it which you will. What should hinder the Supreme Being from permitting a necessary good conduct to be followed by a necessary adequate happiness? What should prevent him from making known this happiness, which he connects with the suitable conduct of his rational creatures, and proposing it as a reward, in order to incite them by this motive to pursue such a conduct? As little is necessity derogatory to virtue, unless in the definition of virtue we arbitrarily refuse all impulse, and every kind of necessity, such as consists in the relation of cause and effect; that is, unless we assume what has been disputed above. According to the common use of language we call a man virtuous who thinks and acts in a manner suitable to his nature, destination, and the grand purposes of his being. To ascribe to him virtue, we merely consider whether this manner of thinking and acting

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proceed from his moral character, and whether his virtue be his own will, choice, and determination; without concerning ourſelves how, or after what laws, his good thoughts and actions ariſe, whether they be neceſſary or accidental, and whether the ſame man who acts juſtly and uprightly could, in the very ſame internal and external circumſtances, and propoſing the very ſame grounds, have acted wickedly and unjuſtly. We deem it ſufficient, that he acts ſpontaneouſly, and that his determinations and actions accord with his will and underſtanding: ſufficient, that he is not ſubjected to a blind fate, by means of which he is abſolutely determined to a certain mode of acting and ſuffering, let what will have preceded, and independent of his internal or external circumſtances.

If it be alleged, that he who is determined to the end muſt alſo be determined to the means, and that, conſequently, abſolute and conditional neceſſity amount to the ſame thing; we ſhall obſerve this important difference, that the rational agency of man is conſiſtent with that conditional neceſſity which the mechaniſm of the ſoul admits, but with abſolute neceſſity it is incompatible and impoſſible. Were man aſſured, that a certain conſequence would be inevitable, let him do what he would, and that it would infallibly happen, independent of any means that he might chooſe to employ, he would do nothing to obſtruct or promote it, and would have no motive to act. On the other hand, if conſequences be always connected with certain means known to man, and nothing happens but in a certain ſeries and order, and when ſomething elſe has preceded it; if, too, they be ſo far contingent, that he cannot foreſee them with certainty, or cannot foreſee them in as far as all that we term means do not precede in an appointed order; he muſt firſt employ the means, if he deſire them to happen, or, if he deſire them not

not to happen, he muſt avoid every thing that precedes when ſuch conſequences follow: in other words, his uncertainty of the future will make it ſo far contingent to him, that he will be capable of agency. Whilſt he alſo knows, that if this future actually will be, it can no otherwiſe be than as preceded by certain circumſtances, and as he does or avoids certain actions, in this knowledge he will have a principle of action, or a motive to ſet his mechaniſm agoing. Suppoſe a man to have broken a bone; if his fate were ſubjected to blind neceſſity, and this accident muſt have a conſequence, whether foreſeen by him or not, which muſt at all events follow, whatever precede, or whatever ſteps be taken by him, he would remain inactive and in deſpair, unable to act or will. This is the conſequence of abſolute neceſſity. It deſtroys all action. If a man in the ſame circumſtance know not the event of the fracture, and cannot foreſee whether he ſhall recover or die, yet knows that for his recovery his bone muſt be united and healed, and that he muſt conduct himſelf in a proper manner to obtain this, or otherwiſe will inevitably die; this uncertainty and knowledge taken together will enable and determine him to act. Thus conditional neceſſity by no means deſtroys rational agency, whilſt man knows not the future, but by preceding circumſtances, and cannot determine neceſſary conſequences, but by the means he employs. It may be ſaid: if man be ſubject to abſolute neceſſity, cannot his uncertainty of the future impel him to act, as well as if he were ſubject to conditional neceſſity? To this I ſhall anſwer: even if he be capable of action, that action cannot be rational: it can only be the effect of chance, ſince he muſt want thoſe principles of action which his knowledge of cauſe and effect, and his inſight into the natural courſe of things would afford him on the ſcheme of conditional neceſſity.

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Hence it follows, that according to the ſyſtem of conditional neceſſity, or mechaniſm, man is an agent, produces himſelf his actions and paſſions, and acts either adequately or indequately to his ultimate end, is virtuous or wicked, and conſequently happy or miſerable; and as religion is given him as a mean of becoming virtuous and happy, by it he is capable of being both.

That the doctrine of neceſſity is liable to be miſconceived and miſapplied, is no objection to the doctrine itſelf, when it may be proved that the abuſe of it always proceeds from its being miſunderſtood. If the wicked man allege: I am deſtined to ſin, I muſt neceſſarily and continually act wickedly; he will fortify himſelf by this notion againſt the fear of puniſhment, and attempt not to make himſelf better. The principle of neceſſity, however, cannot free him from puniſhment, or the evil conſequences of his wickedneſs. As his actions are not unjuſt, becauſe they are neceſſary, his puniſhment is not unjuſt, becauſe it is equally neceſſary. It depends on his evil deeds, as an effect on a cauſe, as his actions on the cauſes which produced them. Daily experience teaches him this, in the evils he ſuffers in conſequence of his irrational conduct. Equally groundleſs, and contrary to experience, is it for him to reject all attempts to amend himſelf under the pretext of neceſſity. The improvement or depravation of his mind is only conditionally neceſſary. Both are to him accidental. According as he employs, or neglects, the means which lead to one, or the other, ſuch improvement, or depravation, muſt enſue. His preſent evil ſtate, and preſent propenſity to wickedneſs, no more juſtify him in concluding their duration and increaſe inevitable, than the diſordered ſtate of his body in diſeaſe the infallible neceſſity of his dying. Were this mode of concluſion juſt, man would attempt no alteration of thoſe things

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in which his convenience required a change, and be unable to apply any endeavours for that purpose: ſince being in their natural ſtate uſeleſs, and inadequate to the purpoſes, they muſt, according to this reaſoning, ever remain ſo, or ſtill continue to be noxious, if they be ſo at preſent. On this principle, if a man's foot ſlip, and he be in danger of falling, he ought not to endeavour to ſave himſelf, but let the event be as it may.

If a man, who from the neceſſary connections in nature ſhould draw ſuch concluſions, and would act from theſe, or rather, acknowledging his fate wholly inevitable, remain inactive, ſhould be guilty of an obvious folly, the notion of neceſſity would not quiet his mind, or juſtify him in his own breaſt for his inactivity, or deſpair of improving his diſpoſition. The leſs the conſequences and efficacity of the means which lead to ſuch an end are doubtful, and the leſs chance reigns in the world, the leſs could he do this, and with the more certainty might he hope for the happy conſequences of ſuch means, if employed in the way preſcribed by religion.

PROPOSITION I. p. 5.

On the Poſition of ſufficient Cauſes.

The principle, that ſomething has exiſted from all eternity, or that there never was a time when nothing exiſted, with which Locke alſo begins the proof of the exiſtence of God, is the ſame which the German philoſophers term the poſition of ſufficient cauſes, and the univerſality of which Clarke would not grant Leibnitz. If we except the known Carteſian proof of the poſſibility of a perfect being from his reality, all proofs of the exiſtence of God are founded on the poſition of ſufficient cauſes, and, as far as they

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are ſolid and convincing, depend on the truth and univerſality of this poſition. If there were a ſingle caſe in which any thing might be and commence without a reaſon and without a cauſe, a world, for ought we know, might ſo originate. Perhaps, therefore, Hume was not in the wrong, in refuſing to admit the application of the poſition of ſufficient cauſes to the origin of the world, ſince, according to his opinion, this poſition being founded ſolely on conſtant experience, all the caſes in which we have found it juſt are totally unlike that to which it is applied as a proof of the exiſtence of God, and we are by no means juſtified in applying it to caſes of which we can have no experience. To remove theſe and ſimilar difficulties, it were to be wiſhed, that the poſition of ſufficient cauſes might be brought into a neceſſary and indiſputable connection with the firſt principles of all human knowledge, the poſitions of compatibility and incompatibility. This has been attempted, and Baumgarten's endeavours to do it are well known. His proof of the poſition of ſufficient cauſes from that of incompatibility, however, fails, if not in truth, in the neceſſary evidence. Nothing, he maintains, would be ſomething, if nothing were the ſufficient cauſe of ſomething: but if inſtead of the words he uſes in the latter part of this propoſition we ſubſtitute the equivalent ones, if ſomething had no cauſe, his conſequence appears to fail.

Perhaps the connection of the two principles may be better ſhewn in the following manner. Every man, even the atheiſt, unleſs he would eſtabliſh one ſimple idea, muſt agree, that *nothing* or ſomething *impoſſible*, is that which annihilates itſelf, is incompatible, and is at the ſame time A and not A. Thus all that is affirmed of it muſt equally be denied. Nothing can apply to it, and therefore it is not an object of thought. On the contrary, that which does not annihilate itſelf, is not incompatible, is A or not

A, may be termed *poſſible* and *ſomething*. Something may be affirmed or denied of it. Something will apply to it, and therefore it is an object of thought. Whether we allow it to be the firſt idea of a poſſibility or an impoſſibilty, or the immediate conſequence of the firſt idea, that it is or is not an object of thought, the concluſion will be the ſame, whilſt it is admitted, that an idea which annihilates itſelf cannot be conceived by God or man, as it plainly is not an object of thought. Now let me aſk: is a ſhining ſun an impoſſibility? This no one will aſſert. But has its poſſibility any grounds? May I aſk why it is poſſible? Unqueſtionably it is poſſible, becauſe it is an object of thought; and it is an object of thought, becauſe the ideas of a ſun and of light are not incompatible. Thus the abſence, the want of incompatibility, is the ground of all poſſibility; and the poſition of compatibility is founded on and preſuppoſes the poſition of a ſufficient cauſe. Let us not cavil about the expreſſion of abſence or want of incompatibility. This abſence forms a true reality; as the want of all imperfection produces the greateſt perfection. Neither can the univerſality of this poſition be diſputed. It extends itſelf ſolely to poſſibilities, and ought not to be confounded with the poſition, that there is no effect without a cauſe. The latter is merely a deduction from the former, and is only applicable to things which actually are. If it be aſked, is ſuch a thing poſſible? we ſhould firſt inquire, is there any incompatibility in it? The aſcertaining of this can alone determine its poſſibility or impoſſibility. But if every thing be grounded on poſſibility, and poſſibility be an object of thought, nothing without ground can be an object of thought. Every thing that is has its grounds. Nothing is without grounds. All our ideas certainly ſpring from ſuch an inveſtigation, ſince no idea can ariſe in any other way. A wooden whetſtone is

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mentioned to me as a rarity. I laugh at it as an abſurdity, till I am convinced, that wood is capable of being petrified, and that the incompatibility which I at firſt ſuſpected does not exiſt. If this be perfectly juſt, we cannot long diſpute, whether there be any idea ſo ſimple, that the preſence or abſence of incompatibility in it cannot be determined, or which, in other words, has no grounds of poſſibility or impoſſibility. Certainly there is no ſuch ſimple idea: for every imaginable ſubject muſt have, or be capable of having a predicate; conſequently, between the ſubject and all poſſible predicates there muſt or muſt not be an incompatibility, or it ceaſes to be a ſubject. The ground of this lies in both. The ſubject is never a purely ſimple idea, ſince it admits one predicate, and rejects another. We men never conceive a ſubject without conjoining to it ſome predicate, be it ever ſo obſcurely: ſtill leſs can a ſimple idea be formed in the mind of the infinite being, to whom all poſſible things preſent themſelves in all poſſible connections. Thus it would be granting too much, to ſay, that a poſition without any ground is impoſſible and inconceivable, at leaſt with reſpect to the human underſtanding; as I think I have proved, that it muſt be inconceivable to every thinking being. There is ſuch a relation throughout the whole ſphere of poſſibilities, that two ideas muſt in all caſes be either capable or incapable of being conjoined. The ground of this conſiſts in their compatibility or incompatibility, and as far as they are capable of being combined in thought are they poſſible, or impoſſible, without reference to any particular thinking being. The following obſervations may ſhew us how the human underſtanding arrives at a comprehenſion of what has or has not grounds.

Throughout all nature we diſcover nothing wholly detached, nothing perfectly inſulated, nothing which

is not on one ſide or other connected with ſomething elſe, and nothing indiviſible or unconnected in a certain proportion of power and magnitude, or of quantity in general. This conſtant obſervation of a never-failing and proportionate connection is the origin of our ideas of grounded and ungrounded, of cauſe and effect, and by this are they juſtified. To this alſo may be added,

Secondly, The neceſſary aſſociation of our conceptions. We can have no conception, no perception, that is wholly ſolitary, and independent of every thing. Indeed we perceive an exact proportion of the aſſociated conceptions, at leaſt if we pay a little attention to them. It is the nature of our mind to have aſſociated conceptions, and to aſſociate its ideas according to certain immutable laws. As in this reſpect the human mind agrees with all nature, and as in each there is ſuch a conſtant, complete, and proportionate aſſociation, which regulates what may be clearly conceived of the idea of grounded and ungrounded; this agreement in an aſſociation, which is abſolutely neceſſary to our thinking, muſt be the laſt and deciſive proof of the truth and univerſality of the poſition of ſufficient cauſes, if it could not be proved by abſtract reaſoning.

PROP. II. p. 6.

On the Eternity of God's Exiſtence.

If the foregoing propoſition be admitted, that ſomething muſt have exiſted from all eternity, or, that there never was a time when nothing exiſted, the ſole queſtion that remains is, whether a ſucceſſion of finite dependent beings can be that ſomething which has exiſted from eternity. To prove that it cannot, it is neceſſary to ſhew, that it is incompatible with

with the above propoſition. I know none of our German philoſophers who has more clearly and deciſively ſhewn this than the late Reimarus in his truths of natural religion, to which I refer thoſe of my readers, to whom Hartley's concluſions are not ſufficiently clear and convincing. In the mean time, as I confeſs, that this important point deſerves a more ſtrict inveſtigation, and fuller explanation than are here beſtowed upon it, I will endeavour to elucidate our author's arguments.

The firſt term of an infinite ſeries, ſays he, would be an effect without a cauſe, which, from the firſt propoſition, is inadmiſſible. The firſt term, like all the other terms of this ſeries, is a ſomething of itſelf, and diſtinct from all the reſt. Like thoſe which follow, it muſt have a cauſe external to itſelf, or ſomething muſt be conceived prior to it; conſequently it cannot be the firſt. If it be objected, that, in an infinite ſeries or number, no firſt term can be admitted, and that whatever term we take can only be a continuation of a ſeries infinite *a parte ante*, this continuation of an infinite ſeries, in which there is no firſt term, is deſtitute of a ſufficient cauſe; and, as our author juſtly obſerves, ſuch a ſeries is as impoſſible and inconceivable as a number capable of increaſing or decreaſing without originating from, or arriving at unity. If it be aſſerted, that by increaſing the terms to infinity we approach the cauſe, or ſufficient grounds, of the whole ſeries, and this infinite ſeries be compared with mathematical approximation, in which the magnitude ſought is continually approached nearer, without our being able ever to reach it, our author rightly anſwers, that in ſuch a caſe every ſtep muſt bring us nearer to the cauſe of this infinite ſeries: but this is not the caſe; for however far we go back, or however great we take the ſeries of dependent beings *a parte ante*, we are ſtill equally diſtant from what is ſought, namely, their

true cauſe. Hence what is ſaid of infinite ſeries in mathematics is not applicable here; as in the former we approach the magnitude ſought, in this we do not. In that the difference continually decreaſes, and ultimately becomes imperceptible to us; in this, were we to go back to all eternity, the difference would ever remain the ſame. Thus an infinite ſeries of finite beings is totally incompatible with the poſition of a ſufficient cauſe. This concluſion is more clearly and conciſely deduced by Baumgarten. An infinite ſeries of dependent beings, is, from the propoſition, an infinite ſeries of accidental things, none of which has the cauſe of its exiſtence in itſelf; ſo that ſuch a ſeries muſt be without a cauſe, if it do not originate from a prior neceſſary being.

The next concluſion of our author, that, if there be nothing more in the univerſe than a mere ſucceſſion of finite dependent beings, then there is ſome degree of finiteneſs ſuperior to all the reſt, applies to thoſe, who, to remove the difficulty of accounting for the origin of certain finite beings, admit a being ſuperior but ſtill finite. This is ſhifting the poſition of the difficulty without leſſening it. Such a finite being, however high we place it, requires a cauſe equally with the leaſt. This Hartley applies to man, and obſerves, that as man cannot comprehend his own nature, he muſt imagine a finite being ſuperior to him that can: but as this being muſt naturally be ſuppoſed in a ſimilar ſituation, he muſt go on till he arrives at an infinite being, or one capable of comprehending himſelf. He advances the general propoſition, that no degree of finite being can be taken as the higheſt, as a ſtill higher degree is conceivable, and there is abſolutely no cauſe, or no reaſon, why ſuch a higher degree ſhould not exiſt. This queſtion, the poſſibility of which, if we admit the poſition of a ſufficient cauſe, fully proves its validity, ſtill recurs, till we come to a being whoſe eſſence

eſſence exhauſts all poſſibility, whoſe magnitude is above all meaſure, and who no longer admits of ſaying, why is there not yet a greater? All finite beings, indeed, that we obſerve, ſeem to point to ſuch an immenſurable infinite being. The difficulty which our author notices in the laſt place proceeds only from a miſconception. We aſcribe a cauſe to exiſtent things only ſo far as we diſtinguiſh their reality from their poſſibility, or advance, that, beſides what is neceſſary for us to comprehend their poſſibility, which is the want of incompatibility, we require ſomething more to comprehend their reality. The cauſe of their being what they are muſt be in themſelves, or external to them. In themſelves it cannot be, for that would be the ſame as to ſay, that they produced themſelves. But were there a caſe in which we muſt ſay, that the cauſe of its reality is in the thing which exiſts (and this we can and muſt ſay of God) there can be no cauſe of its reality but its poſſibility. He is, ſince he can be, and in him reality and poſſibility are no way diſtinguiſhable from each other. This, it is true, runs into the ſo often diſputed proof of the being of God from his poſſibility: which proof, I confeſs, is not to me ſufficiently evident. I cannot, however, without a contradiction, maintain the oppoſite ſide of the queſtion; I cannot ſay, God does not exiſt becauſe he is poſſible; or, his poſſibility and reality are not ſo cloſely connected, that the former preſuppoſes the latter. Were I to ſay this, I muſt annihilate the idea of a ſelf-exiſtent neceſſary being, and return to that of accidental things, which, actually to be, require ſomething more than to be poſſible, or which require grounds for their poſſibility, and, beſides theſe, grounds for their reality.

PROP. III. p. 9.

On the Infinity of God.

Our author dwells longer on the proof of the divine attributes of power and knowledge, and particularly of the infiniteneſs of thoſe attributes, than is uſual with the German philoſophers, who commonly content themſelves with the firſt argument, that an infinite being muſt be infinite in every thing which he is or has, and conſequently his attributes muſt be infinite. Indeed it is abſurd and contradictory, that a being can be finite in one reſpect, and infinite in another; or that the powers and qualities of a being, which conſtitute the eſſence of that being, and through which it properly exiſts, ſhould be of different and indeed oppoſite natures. To him who underſtands the meaning of the words this muſt be as evident as the poſition, that a finite being muſt have finite powers, and cannot poſſeſs infinite qualities.

Let us however examine our author's particular proofs for the infinity of God's attributes. The inſtances and evidences of power and wiſdom which we find in nature are innumerable and incomprehenſible; with reſpect to our comprehenſion, then, at leaſt they are infinite: and this conception of a relative infinity ultimately loſes itſelf in our minds, and is changed into an abſolute infinity. He ſhews alſo, that we are led from the poſition of a ſufficient cauſe to admit an infinite univerſe, or an univerſe infinite in number and extenſion: ſince if we ſuppoſe the univerſe to be finite, or limited in number and extenſion, we muſt inquire after the cauſe of this limitation, and as we can find none, we muſt reject the ſuppoſition. Thus the whole comes

comes to this, from the idea we have of a dependent being, a being inconceivable without an external cauſe, and which conſequently never actually has all that it is capable of having, or the reality of which is never the ſame with its poſſibility (and ſuch the author ſuppoſes the world to be) does it not naturally follow, that ſuch a being cannot be infinite in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word, or as we ſay that God is infinite?

That is truly and metaphyſically infinite which has every thing poſſible, that is, every thing real, or which has no limits. To be infinite, and to have no limits, are the ſame. But what is that which can have no limits? Unqueſtionably nothing but a reality. In God every reality is without limits: were it limited, or might it be conceived greater than it is, it would not have, or rather would not be, all that it might. For this there muſt be ſome cauſe; and this cauſe muſt be either in God, or out of him. In the latter caſe, he would no longer be a ſelf-exiſtent independent being; he would not be God: in the former, the limiting cauſe muſt be in his will, which is inconceivable, or in his other realities oppoſing and limiting one another. Were ſuch a limitation of God's realities conceivable, it would follow, that there was actually ſome negation in the idea of God; ſince all limitation muſt ariſe from a negation, or a contradiction. But no reality conſidered in itſelf can be contradictory to the others. No reality, generally or abſolutely taken, involves a negation: and with relative realities we have nothing to do. All God's realities, therefore, abſolutely conſidered, are affirmative, whence no contradiction, and conſequently no limitation of one by another is poſſible. Are we, however, juſtified in conſidering every reality in God as abſolute? Certainly: ſince God is and muſt be actually all that is poſſible; conſequently the grounds of the negation of all limits

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are in his very eſſence. This, I think, would appear more clearly, were we to conſider a relative reality with its cauſes. The degree of mental capacity which a beaſt poſſeſſes is a reality of a relative kind. To the beaſt, a higher degree, the underſtanding of a man for inſtance, would be no reality, and for this reaſon, becauſe it would be incompatible with the other qualities which the beaſt has, and muſt have. Now if we ſuppoſe a being poſſeſſing every thing that would render the higheſt degree of underſtanding not only poſſible, but capable of acting in the moſt perfect manner; in ſuch a being the higheſt degree of underſtanding would find nothing by which it could be limited: his underſtanding muſt be without limits, or an abſolute reality. Thus it is with God, and with all his realities. His unlimited eſſence, or his independent neceſſary exiſtence, excludes all limitation of his realities, and exalts them to the ſtate of abſolute, ſo that they never admit a negation, but are ever affirmative; conſequently they allow of no colliſion, no cauſe of limitation. I do not think it rightly and accurately ſpeaking, therefore, to ſay: God has all the realities and perfections *that can poſſibly coexiſt.* The laſt is a ſuperfluous addition. All realities, abſolutely conſidered, as in the ſelf-exiſtent being they muſt be, may coexiſt, nothing being denied by either of them. All being affirmative, no oppoſition, no contradiction betwixt them is poſſible. Otherwiſe it appears to me, that no limited true reality external to God is poſſible, of which the original and ſource is not in him. He could not permit any reality actually to be out of him, if he poſſeſſed it not himſelf. God is the moſt real being; whatever is real muſt be in him.

To return again to the queſtion of the infinity of the univerſe. When I ſay, that the truly infinite is that, which, devoid of limits, is either ſo great that we can conceive nothing greater, or, if we conſider

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it as actually exiſting, the reality of which is equal to its poſſibility, according to this definition, infinity is applicable only to the ſelf-exiſtent being, and we muſt deny it to the univerſe as diſtinct from or dependent on him. Infinity, according to which a being is all that it is capable of being, flows from ſelf-exiſtence, and is indeed only another expreſſion for the ſame thing; conſequently it cannot be a property of a dependent being. What follows may ſerve farther to explain this difficult queſtion.

If I confine myſelf to the queſtion, whether the univerſe be infinitely extended, I muſt inquire, whether the univerſe admit of an infinite number of parts: and as this may ſtill be equivocal, I muſt farther inquire, whether any term be to be ſet to its duration. In this ſenſe of the queſtion, I admit, that the parts of the univerſe may be increaſed *a parte poſt* to infinity, not merely in thought, but in reality. If it be aſked, whether the number of its parts be infinite *a parte ante*, I know not what I ſhall anſwer. My cuſtomary ideas of accidental things, which render me unable to conceive them without a beginning and without an origin, ſtick ſo cloſely to me, that I cannot clearly comprehend the queſtion, much leſs ſolve it. I cannot conceive an infinite univerſe in this ſenſe otherwiſe than as an actual one, and conſequently, as it appears to me, conſiſting of an infinite number of unities. I readily confeſs, that ſuch a number is to me inconceivable. It may further be aſked; is the number of parts of the univerſe exiſting at one time infinite, or ſo great, that it would be abſurd to increaſe it in idea? To the given impoſſibility of an actually determinate, and at the ſame time infinite number, the following may be oppoſed. The infinite underſtanding of God is equally determinate, ſince it actually is; but infinity alone can meaſure it, to every created mind it is infinite. Suppoſe it to be divided into an infinite number of finite

finite terms; each of these terms would form a part of an infinite, without any one of them constituting an infinite understanding separately. Each would ever be capable of being conceived greater, and more terms might still be added till the number became infinite. Apply this to an infinite number of existing things. If the number of things existing in the universe be actually infinite, and if we conceive the understanding of God as consisting of an infinite number of finite terms, so far they will agree, and what holds good of the one will hold good of the other. In my opinion, however, this does not apply in the present instance, nor can the notion of a really existing infinite number be thus supported. The understanding of God, I would say, is a perfect unity, indivisible, immensurable. It is so totally different from those of every other intelligent being in quality, as well as in degree and in quantity, that it is not only incommensurate to them, but does not admit of being measured. If, then, I divide the understanding of God into several terms, to make one real infinite number by adding these terms together, or to shew the possibility of such a number, my division is merely chimerical, and, as I can assume no actual determinate unity, I can no more produce a number of unities, than I could produce a number from an arbitrary division of an absolute unity, if I were to suppose it something real. Now when I consider the universe and its parts, I have things actually existing distinct from one another, I have real not imaginary unities, and these must constitute a number: but if these actually constitute a number, they must bear a proportion to unity, and there is no contradiction in supposing this proportion still greater and greater: consequently this number cannot be infinite in the foregoing sense of the word.

Notwithstanding all its difficulties, however, if we would solve this question with some degree of certainty,

certainty, I believe we muſt have recourſe to a perfect univerſe. God would produce the moſt perfect, whence it muſt contain as many and as great things as poſſible, and, which is of moſt importance, theſe muſt have the greateſt poſſible harmony with each other. The number of actual things harmonizing with one another contributes not ſo much to perfection as the degree in which they harmonize, with this diſtinction, that whilſt perfection increaſes with the number, ſo long is a greater number requiſite to the attainment of the greater perfection. The queſtion, then, will come to this: does infinite extenſion, or an infinite number of actual things contribute moſt to the perfection of the univerſe? The latter can only be true, if an infinite number admit greater harmony than a limited one. We cannot but make the following concluſion: were only one individual moſt perfect univerſe amongſt more leſs perfect poſſible, it would be an exception to the rule of the greateſt perfection, and a ſyſtem of actual things derogatory to the perfection of the whole would be poſſible. Other ſyſtems, beſides thoſe which actual are, preſuppoſe, beſides the altered ſyſtems, other exiſting things. Hence all that is poſſible does not actually exiſt, and this world is not infinitely extended, becauſe, if it were infinitely extended a greater perfection would be loſt.

I muſt ſtill obſerve, that infinite extenſion is not to be confounded with infinite duration. Of this it is clear, as the late Reimarus has ſufficiently proved, that it can never be infinite by ſucceſſions, even though they proceed without end. So we perceive Hartley cannot deduce an infinite univerſe from the poſition of ſufficient cauſes: as the queſtion, why did not God create more exiſting things than a limited univerſe contains? may always be anſwered thus: the greateſt perfection and the wiſeſt ends required no more, nay would admit no more.

PROP.

PROP. IV. p. 13. To follow Bodily Miſery.

On the ſpiritual Happineſs of Man.

When we deſire pure happineſs, we know not what we deſire, we are ignorant of ourſelves and of our nature, and how far we are capable of happineſs. It is even difficult for us to form an idea of pure happineſs. The moſt general opinion is, that we are to underſtand by it an uninterrupted ſtate of pleaſing ſenſations, at leaſt an everlaſting excluſion of all pain and miſery, or ſuch a ſtate as a man would not wiſh to exchange for any other. If we admit that the happineſs of man be compounded of ſenſual and mental enjoyments, to procure him pure happineſs, the fountains of both muſt flow uninterruptedly, nor muſt one bitter drop be mixed in the ſtream of pleaſure that he quaffs. According to this datum his pleaſures muſt be continually increaſing, and never diminiſhed: for the diminution of pleaſure, or a leſs degree of it, is pain, which would detract from pure happineſs. Or, if this were not the caſe, he muſt remain unalterably in the ſame degree of enjoyment, and at the ſame time his taſte muſt not be weakened by its continuance; his capacity for pleaſure, and the ſtimulus of the object, or its power of pleaſing him, muſt ever poſſeſs the ſame force and efficacy. Both the former and the latter ſuppoſition are repugnant to the actual, and, in my opinion, the eſſential conſtitution of nature. According to this we muſt conceive every pleaſure to be an enjoyment (this is indiſputably the caſe with ſenſual pleaſures at leaſt) and every enjoyment preſuppoſes a deſire, every deſire a need. The ſenſation of a need differs from the ſenſation of enjoyment, and the ſtate of deſire is, compared with the ſtate

ſtate of enjoyment at leaſt, an unpleaſant ſenſation. The man, then, who would enjoy, and find pleaſure in enjoyment, muſt firſt deſire, and in deſiring and needing he muſt find pain and diſquietude. If this pain and diſquietude of deſire be frequently little noticed by us, it is becauſe they are greatly leſſened by the certain expectation of approaching pleaſure, and the anticipation of enjoyment. They cannot, however, be wholly annihilated; for, if they were, the taſte of enjoyment would be equally imperceptible. We only obtain a lively ſenſation of enjoyment by comparing it with a preceding want, or with its oppoſite. Thus much is certain from experience, that the ſenſation of health, which is to man the greateſt of all ſenſual pleaſures, and which ſhould be, and in certain circumſtances actually is, the ſum of all, is reduced to an almoſt imperceptible and indifferent ſenſation, if we have not an opportunity of comparing it with the oppoſite ſenſations of pain and ſickneſs. It only riſes to that noticeable height and force which we call pleaſure, when it follows, or admits of a lively compariſon with its oppoſite ſenſation. I do not aſſert that compariſon is abſolutely the ſole cauſe of pleaſure. On the contrary, I am much inclined to admit, that there is ſomething poſitive and abſolute both in ſenſual and mental pleaſures; though I muſt confeſs that it is extremely difficult to give an exact ſtandard for them, and that this ſtandard muſt be different in each individual. In general terms I would ſay, that the more or leſs obſcure perception of order in the body and mind conſtitutes abſolute ſenſual and mental pleaſure. Where this order is perceived to preponderate in the body or mind, there would I place the beginning or limits of pleaſure: thence forwards the ſenſations riſe through the different degrees of pleaſure to ecſtaſy and bliſs, whilſt backwards they proceed through the various degrees of pain to conſummate

conſummate wretchedneſs. Still the compariſon of our ſenſations with their oppoſites unqueſtionably contributes much to their riſing or ſinking in this ſcale; and experience ſeems to tell us, that in ſenſual enjoyments we are indebted to compariſon for our principal pleaſures.

If we conſider mental happineſs, and particularly its moſt important part moral happineſs, or the ſum of thoſe pleaſures which ariſe from the perfect conſciouſneſs of ourſelves, from the faculty of forming general ideas, from the remembrance of the paſt, proſpect of the future, and the capability of advancing towards perfection by means of theſe, compariſon ſeems here far leſs neceſſary than in ſenſual happineſs. Still here there is a need, and from this need ariſes an impulſe to act; conſequently ſome diſquietude is neceſſary. This diſquietude preceding action, if it be not abſolutely painful, cannot, on compariſon, be equally pleaſing with the conſciouſneſs of having attained the end. Now if this progreſſive round of efforts and attainments be continually recurring, there muſt be a ſucceſſion of more and leſs pleaſing ſenſations. Thus, then, here alſo pure happineſs, in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word, is inadmiſſible. It is evident, too, that in proportion as the difficulties of attaining the ends propoſed, and conſequently the preceding diſquietude, are increaſed or leſſened, the pleaſures of attaining thoſe ends will be increaſed or leſſened alſo. If we deprive a man of the dangers of the combat, we rob him of the reward of victory.

How little pure happineſs is compatible with our nature may alſo be conceived from the degree of perfection which is eſſential to it. Man, as experience tells us, when he enters into being, has nothing but capacity, and the foundations of what he is to be. This capacity muſt firſt be unfolded, theſe foundations built upon. He muſt acquire expertneſs by practice, become by degrees what he is capable of becoming,

becoming, and probably grow and improve without ceasing. If this be his destination, in the beginning of his existence he must be placed at the lowest point of his perfection, or his degree of perfection must be allowed as wide a sphere of activity as possible. For argument's sake, let us suppose, that man can go through a hundred degrees of perfection in the whole sphere of his existence; it is not probable, that he should be placed at once in the middle or fiftieth, without ever having passed the first. Were it so, we might ask: why in this, and not in a higher? and if we take a higher, the question would still recur, till we arrived at the last. To avoid it we must either take the highest or the lowest. Thus the perfection of which man is capable being given, the first degree from which he sets out on his progress to that perfection must be, in comparison with the second, third, &c. imperfection, that is, ignorance, inexperience, and the like, or moral evil with proportionate physical evil.

We will endeavour to make the matter still clearer. According to the benevolent plan of his Creator, man should be capable of the greatest possible happiness, and indeed by his own free agency. Now the question naturally arises: when may the actions of a created being be termed free, and when not? It needs no proof, that a knowledge of good and evil, of the good or bad consequences of an action are necessary, before such an action can be undertaken freely, or from choice. This knowledge cannot be merely historical, but it must have a force, vigour, and certainty, inevitably to produce the action, and must be a man's proper knowledge. But this can only be obtained by experience. Let us caution a child, that has never known pain nor received an injury, ever so strongly against fire, let us exert ourselves ever so much to convince him that it will burn him, whilst he has never been burnt, nor felt

any ſimilar pain, all will be inſufficient to guard him againſt it. Let it not be ſaid, that the truſt or confidence which we uſually place in our ſeniors or friends will ſufficiently ſupply the want of proper experience. This confidence, if it could take place in all caſes, muſt be founded on experience: ſome caſe muſt have occurred, in which we received injury from refuſing confidence to our warning friends. Not to mention, that ſo complete an inſtruction as to extend to all the occurrences of life, to all our ſenſations, and to all our ideas, is not poſſible. Daily example evidently ſhews us how much our own experience is preferable to the inſtructions of others. It requires but little reflection for us to perceive, that our proper experience would be abſolutely neceſſary, to make the knowledge and inſight of others become our own, and ſerve as incentives to our actions. In reality we do not underſtand the words in which neceſſary advice or wholeſome warning is given us, if we have not in ſome caſes acquired a knowledge of the thing itſelf, which is only to be obtained by experience. All the advantage we can derive from confidence in others, or the principle of faith, which is as neceſſary and uſeful in common life as in religion, is its freeing us from the difficulty and danger of making experiments on every new occurrence, and enabling us to avail ourſelves of the knowledge and inſight acquired by the experience of others, when we have previouſly had analogous experience of ſimilar caſes, and ſo much knowledge and inſight, that we underſtand and muſt follow the good advice of others, whilſt we have not a complete knowledge and experience of the ſubject ourſelves.

This being admitted, it cannot be denied, that all the actions of an intelligent agent muſt be connected together, or form one whole. Conceptions produce actions, and theſe again produce conceptions, till a man has collected his whole ſtock of experience, filled

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up the measure of his activity, and quits the stage of life. Many of his conceptions are no doubt borrowed, and not the result of his own experience; but these he will not appropriate, these will produce no action, till he perceives their connection with what himself has experienced. Our confidence in others enables us to supply the place of our own insight and experience with theirs, only when by reflection and use we have interwoven them with ours. New discoveries make the most rapid progress when we can most readily comprehend them from what we generally observe, and find to be true. The conceptions we derive from others cannot be so complete and forcible as those produced by our own experience, unless they cause an equal action. Our faith or confidence in those who impart them to us extends only so far as to induce us to apply them to use, and bring them to the test of experience. Only from this trial and reflection do they become our own.

Hence it is evident why man, at his birth, is placed on the lowest step of the perfection of which he is capable, and must be able to make himself unhappy by his agency. If no original bias be imparted to the human mind, and if its actions be free, the most simple action must be its own resolve, and conception which produced it must have been its own. Whatever step, except the lowest, we place at the beginning, we must admit innate ideas, which man did not procure for himself, which were to him as dead treasure, and could not be the grounds of agency. To this, every thing, except the faculty of thinking and willing, must be his own work.

This is equally true with respect to the body. In man this can have no artificial impulse, no innate activity, like that of beasts. If all its arbitrary motions accord with the free resolves of the mind, it must be formed, accustomed, and exercised to all the free actions of man, whatever be their nature (without

any difference whether they tend to his happineſs or unhappineſs) and conſequently in this view it muſt be placed on the loweſt ſtep of that perfection of which it is capable; otherwiſe diſagreements muſt ariſe between the mind and its companion.

Can it any longer remain a doubt, whether man, as man, be capable of pure happineſs? To be happy, he muſt be free, he muſt be an agent. To be an agent, he muſt make experiments, he muſt examine what is good and what is bad, he muſt taſte pleaſure and pain, acquire expertneſs, and make himſelf happy even at the peril of being unhappy. This diſpoſition of things, however, is productive of happineſs far greater at bottom than that which is termed pure, were ſuch happineſs poſſible to a finite and mutable being. Every ſtep towards perfection produces an immediate pleaſure, in as much as it is an exerciſe of the powers, and an application of activity: though this pleaſure, as I have already obſerved, is inferior to that ariſing from the attainment of the end propoſed. A certain diſquietude remains, not to be confounded with the notion of pure happineſs in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word, but which actually increaſes the ſum of happineſs conſidered in the whole, as it makes our perception of it more vivid by compariſon. But the true ſource of mental pleaſure is the contemplation of perfection attained. This pleaſure is exalted by comparing it with the leſs that preceded, and by the remembrance of what a man was ſhewing him what he is, if he conſider what he is as the fruit and conſequence of his own endeavours, and be convinced that in all he did his actions were free. This reflection appears to me an inexpreſſible addition to the pleaſures which conſtitute the mental happineſs of man.

Finally, we muſt bring the proſpect of the future into our calculation of mental happineſs. Did man perceive nothing before him but a ſtate wholly unalterable, his nature muſt be changed, its progreſs and

and accompliſhment, and the active impulſe of his mind to extend itſelf would be done away; ſince, in this view of the future, his preſent happineſs would admit not of being augmented or impaired. But were we ſo framed, that we could foreſee only a diminution of our happineſs, or a reſtricted increaſe of it, the proſpect of futurity would be painful or unpleaſant, and our preſent enjoyments leſſened and diſturbed. In the eye of one who contemplates the whole courſe of our lives, as our author well obſerves, we derive from our nature a balance of happineſs; but to us, conſcious of our progreſſive courſe and ever hoping a greater happineſs, to us, who enjoy pleaſure in every ſtep we take towards perfection, which enjoyment is inceſſantly increaſing, this nature gives more true pleaſure than a pure, unalterable, and on that account limited happineſs could ever beſtow.

This view of the mental happineſs of man, conſidered as the ſum of all the pleaſures which the imagination forms from the remembrance of the paſt and proſpect of the future, will probably afford us a ſolution of the queſtion: is man moſt happy or miſerable? The ſafeſt manner of determining it would certainly be to let the general experience of mankind decide; but its voice is not ſufficiently clear. Inſtead, therefore, of a poſitive anſwer, which is not to be obtained, we may be permitted to have recourſe to preſumptive proofs. Such a preſumptive proof of the preponderance of happineſs the very increaſing nature of mental pleaſure ſeems to me to afford. This is capable of conſtant augmentation, and if man have but an obſcure conception and preſentiment of the future extenſion of his happineſs, ſtill more if he have a clear idea of it, he would upon the whole obtain a very great balance of happineſs in his preſent circumſtances, and throughout the whole courſe of his exiſtence in general, as this conception of future increaſing happineſs acquired

clearneſs, certainty, and ſtrength in his mind. However dubious and uncertain the calculation of the number, nature, and degree of his pains and pleaſures may be, and however unable we may be to determine whether he be more happy or miſerable, when we contemplate his happineſs and miſery in a given point of time, we cannot in the leaſt heſitate to allow him a balance of happineſs when he has a proſpect of a boundleſs futurity, in which he has to expect a happier fate, and in general more good than he has ever yet enjoyed. When the underſtanding of a man is ſo exalted as to look into futurity, and make himſelf an intereſt there through fear and hope, in calculating his happineſs we muſt no longer confine ourſelves to his preſent pains and pleaſures, but we muſt take into the reckoning his hopes and fears, add them to or ſubtract them from his preſent pleaſures and pains, and take the balance of the whole for the true ſum of his actual happineſs. This operation, it is true, offers great difficulties; as to calculate accurately the good or evil of thoſe hopes or fears, their duration, intenſity and degree of certainty muſt be eſtimated. Thus to compute them with mathematical exactitude is not practicable. It is ſufficient for our purpoſe, that, as we learn from general experience, the greater part of mankind fear a change of circumſtances when they are happy leſs than they hope it when unhappy, and are more inclined to form pleaſing and conſolatory than comfortleſs and unpleaſing proſpects of futurity. This, I believe at leaſt, is the general propenſity of mankind; and as the gloomy proſpect of the future is naturally more unwelcome to the mind than the joyful one, it is not ſo laſting, or retained ſo long in it, if the body enjoy but a tolerable ſtate of health. All pleaſures of the imagination, indeed, depend on the ſtate of the body, and are ſo connected with its well being, that whilſt its degree of health over-

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balances that of ſickneſs, pleaſing images, particularly of the future, muſt predominate over unpleaſing and mournful ones. The ſolution of the queſtion, therefore, depends in great meaſure on this, whether there be more healthy or ſick men in the world, and whether men upon the whole experience moſt painful or agreeable ſenſations from their bodies. To this experience gives us a clear and preciſe anſwer. What our author ſays of the gaiety and joyfulneſs of youth, whilſt their bodies are in a growing ſtate, in anſwer to the queſtion, agrees with this. It is unnatural and unuſual to obſerve a laſting diſcontent or ſorrow in children or young perſons. Their griefs are tranſient, and their predominant propenſity is to mirth and jollity. Even though we ſhould not allow, with ſome philoſophers, that the agreement between the welfare of the body and cheerfulneſs of the mind is owing to ſome obſcure perceptions which the latter has of the order and perfection of the former (which however appears to be very juſt) ſtill the fact itſelf is ſufficiently aſcertained by experience. Thus the greater part of mankind are far more inclined to hope than fear, in their views of futurity. Were it not ſo, it would appear, that our miniſters, whoſe buſineſs it is to ſhew man the road to true happineſs, would be far more ſucceſsful, and would have much more occaſion to comfort and conſole, than to admoniſh and reprove.

But were the propenſity of the greater part of mankind rather to hope than fear the future allowed to determine the balance of happineſs over miſery, it might be objected, that happineſs built upon this foundation would be very inſecure and uncertain, that on a juſter knowledge and more extenſive inſight into things it muſt diminiſh, and that by enlightened reaſon it muſt be deſtroyed. To this I reply, firſt, however feeble the foundation on which this happineſs is built may be, ſtill, whilſt it ſtands, it is as effectual

as if it were ever ſo true and ſubſtantial: for a falſe imagination, as long as it is conceived to be true, procures as great a pleaſure as if it were true in reality. Secondly, before a man's hopes or fears with their foundations become ſuſpected, he muſt have acquired an improved underſtanding, and this particularly when ſupported by the chriſtian revelation, muſt have relieved him from the diſquiets which he previouſly felt, and, in the ſame proportion in which theſe diſquiets were ſtrong and well-founded, have led him to true comfort, to a ſure proſpect of the future, and to ſuch a well-founded hope, as, added to the ſum of his actual happineſs, muſt give it an infinite ſuperiority over his actual miſery.

Were I inclined to admit a ſituation in which the balance of miſery ſhould preponderate, it would be that middle condition between half and complete knowledge of a future, between certainty and uncertainty of ſuch a ſtate, in which a man foreſees and conjectures that there is a futurity, but doubts of his participation in it, or is fearful of his deſtination therein. Moſt miſerable of all muſt I think him who has made it his intereſt to deſtroy this futurity, and who is forced to exert all the powers of his mind to reaſon it away. Such a man has only the mournful reſource of plunging into beaſtly ſenſuality, abduring all moral and mental enjoyments, and confining all his happineſs to ſenſual pleaſures; or, ſhould he unfortunately ſucceed in convincing himſelf by his ſophiſtry of the non-exiſtence of a future ſtate, he muſt ſeek an indemnification in an imaginary futurity, form to himſelf ſome pleaſing intereſt in it, and faſhion out gorgeous images of the fame and honour beſtowed on him by poſterity, to ſupply the place of reality. Imperfect as this attempt to create an overbalance of pleaſure muſt ever be, ſtill it is a proof, that the mind is ſo conſtituted as always to fly to happineſs whilſt under the preſſure of miſery.

PROP.

PROP. IV. p. 13.

On the Proofs of God's Benevolence.

THE five propoſitions which our author has advanced (p. 23.) to enable us to comprehend the exerciſe of God's benevolence to man, and in particular to explain how finite proofs of the infinite attributes of God are conceivable, include all that can be conceived of them, and are uſeful to throw light on the ſubject. On theſe, however, it may not be uſeleſs to add ſome remarks.

The firſt ſuppoſition, *that each individual ſhould be always happy infinitely*, is impoſſible, ſince in that caſe every individual muſt be an infinite being, muſt be God. If we take the word infinitely in another ſenſe, as an unceaſing duration of an immutable and limited, or of an increaſing happineſs, it could only apply to the infinite moſt perfect being, and conſequently is impoſſible.

The ſecond, *that each individual ſhould be always finitely happy*, that is, *in a limited degree, without any mixture of miſery, and infinitely ſo in its progreſs through infinite time*, is equally impoſſible, as requiring a pure or perfect happineſs of which no finite being is capable. But that infinity here meant, which conſiſts in an infinite number of finite happineſſes, is nothing more than a mathematical infinity, or number continually increaſing, which may properly be applied to a finite being.

The third, *that each individual ſhould be infinitely happy, upon the balance, in its progreſs through infinite time, but with a mixture of miſery*, differs from the preceding in admitting a portion of evil. This is

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alſo poſſible whilſt it requires only ſuch an infinity as a finite being is capable of.

According to the fourth, *that each individual ſhould be finitely happy in the courſe of its exiſtence, whatever that be, but with a mixture of miſery, and the univerſe be infinitely happy upon a balance*, we muſt ſuppoſe, that the being of man, ſo far as he is ſuſceptible of happineſs, may ceaſe or be annihilated. In the ſenſe in which infinitely is here taken, or ought to be taken, this only can render his happineſs finite. This differs from the foregoing ſuppoſition in admitting a total end to man's happineſs, or an annihilation of his nature. It is difficult, however, to reconcile the latter part of this ſuppoſition with the former, that the univerſe is upon a balance infinitely happy, whilſt beings capable of happineſs are annihilated, unleſs we ſuppoſe happineſs and non-entity to mean the ſame thing. The univerſe here ſpoken of can be nothing but the ſum total of intelligences, or beings capable of happineſs. How infinite happineſs can in any ſenſe be aſcribed to this intellectual world, when ſo conſiderable a part of it as the human race is blotted out of it, is inconceivable. On ſuch a ſuppoſition, the happineſs of the univerſe cannot be infinite, either in a metaphyſical or mathematical ſenſe of the word. Conſidered in a certain point of time it is not ſo great as it might be; ſince if mankind exiſted, and were happy, the ſum would be augmented, and this augmentation is poſſible. What has been, and been happy, may be again, and be again happy. In a mathematical ſenſe alſo, the continual progreſſive ſeries of happineſs of intelligent beings cannot be ſo infinite, if a part of them be annihilated, as it might be if that part ſtill continued to exiſt. Our author remarks, that many thinking, ſerious, benevolent and pious perſons are much inclined to this ſuppoſition. Thoſe who favour it, however, will not willingly admit a limited duration

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of exiſtence: and if this, or the annihilation of mankind be excepted, the fourth ſuppoſition is the ſame with the third. If our author would aſcribe to human happineſs any other kind of infinity than that which conſiſts in continued or inceſſant progreſſion, he runs into a complete contradiction, nor is it conceivable, that the happineſs of a finite being, any more than its other qualities, ſhould be actually unlimited, conſidered in any particular point of time, or, like the happineſs of an infinite being, incapable of increaſe. It is proper to make this remark, as the reader may eaſily be miſled by the abuſe of the word infinite, which expreſſes two different and oppoſite ideas by the ſame term. The one can only be conceived by an infinite intelligence, and properly, too, only of itſelf. Could the infinite intelligence conceive ſuch an infinity applied to the happineſs of its creatures, theſe, as it appears to me, muſt be equally eternal with it, both *a parte ante* and *a parte poſt*; then might they, in reſpect of their eternal and infinite duration, be conceived as infinite by it, ſo far as it overlooks, and, if I may ſo ſay, comprehends them at a ſingle glance. In any other ſenſe, or only ſuppoſing finite beings to have had a beginning, their happineſs cannot once be conceived as metaphyſically infinite by the infinite intelligence. If this be juſt, the abatement, which diſtinguiſhes the third ſuppoſition from the firſt and ſecond, cannot find a place in the fourth in any poſſible ſenſe: I ſay, in any poſſible ſenſe. That the infinite happineſs of man aſſumed in this ſuppoſition ſhould be changed into an abſolute metaphyſically infinite happineſs, as the happineſs of God is, muſt be no leſs impoſſible, than that a finite being ſhould be changed into an infinite one, man into God. The happineſs of the creatures muſt ever, and to all eternity, remain circumſcribed, and capable of farther increaſe, whilſt it can never reach the infinity of God's, though it continually approach

approach it. But if we underſtand infinity when applied to human happineſs to be of ſuch a nature as is conceivable, that is, a perpetually increaſing happineſs, compared with which the preceding or accompanying evil is in ſuch a continually decreaſing, and ultimately ſo ſmall as to be imperceptible, proportion, ſo that in a practical view it is to be conſidered as nothing, we can conceive the happineſs of man, according to the fourth ſuppoſition (if we exclude the idea of annihilation), to be infinite in the ſame ſenſe as it is poſſible according to the two firſt.

An infinite balance of happineſs in the univerſe is ſtill more difficult to be defended on the fifth ſuppoſition, *that ſome individuals ſhould be happy and ſome miſerable upon the balance, finitely or infinitely, and yet ſo that there ſhould be an infinite overplus of happineſs in the univerſe.* An overplus of happineſs is poſſible, even though ſome beings ſhould be abſolutely and perpetually miſerable, or though ſome ſhould be annihilated after having received more evil than good in the period of their exiſtence. But then the number of beings which in the courſe of their exiſtence receive more good than bad muſt be greater, and the good they receive muſt be at leaſt as multifarious and weighty, or even more ſo, than the evil which falls to the ſhare of the more unfortunate, and not leſs in quantity or degree. Now an infinite overplus of happineſs, with any exception, which a number of miſerable beings muſt make in the ſum of the happineſs of the univerſe, is impoſſible to be conceived otherwiſe than as the ſum of miſery bears a ſmall and imperceptible proportion to the ſum of happineſs, or as the number of the unhappy, and the evils they ſuffer, compared with the number of the happy, and the pleaſures they enjoy, are not to be reckoned in a practical view.

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Were such an overplus of happiness styled infinite, as being the greatest possible from the limited nature of all created intelligent beings, I would grant, that such a greatest possible happiness might be relatively termed infinite: but then it must first be shewn, that, from the supposition itself, a finite or infinite overplus of misery to some intelligent beings must exist, and that the idea of finiteness and circumscription requires an overplus of misery in some, whilst the same finiteness requires it not in others. In my opinion, this is not to be shewn from a general view of things. For it must be demonstrated from the finite and limited nature of intelligent beings in general. But whilst both those which are happy, and those which are miserable, have all things in common, the consequences deducible from this idea of finiteness would be equally applicable to all intelligent beings; that is, we must infer an overplus of misery either to all or to none.

The proof of the divine Benevolence from considerations à posteriori will never be free from difficulties if the supposed infinite. But it is demonstrable à priori & in this view follows necessarily from his infinite powers

It is worth while to examine the particular grounds that philosophy may allege for or against such a supposition. I will endeavour impartially to display the most important that may be brought forward on either side, without attempting to pass a judgment on them.

From rational determinations of the attributes of God and of the nature of intelligent beings, and from analogy, or experience, these grounds must be taken. If we contemplate the attributes of God, that perfect benevolence, which we must ascribe to him, seems in no wise to favour the supposition, that he should sacrifice one part of his creatures, equally capable of an overplus of happiness, to the rest, or that he should build the welfare of certain intelligent beings on the destruction of others. The idea of the most perfect and consequently impartial benevolence leads us directly to an opposite conclusion: we are reduced, then, to admit some other attribute whereby God's

God's benevolence, or its influence on the unhappy part of the creation, is limited; or that, notwithſtanding the perfection of God's benevolence, the nature of finite beings is ſo framed, and muſt of neceſſity be ſo framed, that one part could not be happy, but at the expence of the other.

Now on the other hand it may be ſaid: ſuch perfections of God, which ſet bounds to his benevolence in its influence on the unhappy, are righteouſneſs and juſtice. From theſe attributes God has an infinite ſatisfaction in truth and order, and an equally infinite diſlike to whatever departs from order and truth. Both theſe are in the higheſt degree active. Such creatures, therefore, as deviate from truth and order cannot but experience the effects of God's diſpleaſure, ſo far, and as long as they continue to deviate from them: and ſince God preſides as a lawgiver and ruler over his intelligent creatures, he muſt puniſh thoſe that rebel againſt him, he muſt maintain the authority of his wiſe and benevolent laws, and his juſtice muſt ſacrifice to the welfare of the whole thoſe who will not amend.

To this it may be replied, that the attributes of righteouſneſs and juſtice, if properly conſidered, are by no means ſo adverſe to benevolence as might be inferred from what precedes. The moſt righteous and juſt ruler may alſo be the moſt benevolent, if he be the moſt powerful. His benevolence, it is true, would not be diſplayed in a ſimilar manner to his dutiful and undutiful ſubjects: he would not reward the latter as the former; but his good-will towards them would ſhew itſelf in ſuch diſpoſitions and regulations as would render them equally obedient, and by theſe benevolent, though forcible meaſures, would he reveal his juſtice and righteouſneſs, maintain the authority of his wholeſome laws, and promote the well-being of his whole kingdom. He muſt puniſh; but his puniſhments would be corrections.

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We may admit, not without grounds, that the diſtinction betwixt puniſhment and correction, the end of the former being to prevent the ſpreading of wickedneſs by warning and deterring others from it, and of the latter, to amend thoſe to whom it is applied, is founded on the weakneſs of mortal rulers, and not applicable to God. Mortal rulers are not always able to puniſh in ſuch a manner as to amend thoſe on whom they inflict puniſhment. They cannot in the ſame action conſult the private advantage of the individual, and the public benefit of the whole, ſo that they are obliged to diſtinguiſh the two, and, for the general good, ſacrifice the leſs to the greater. Both theſe ends, indeed, may be compatible with each other. We may ſo puniſh, that the puniſhment may be a mean of reclaiming the puniſhed, and at the ſame time prevent the ſpreading of vice by ſerving as a warning to others. Thus when we diſtinguiſh puniſhment from correction, this diſtinction will only hold, it appears, whilſt we ſpeak of human correction and puniſhment: ſince the diſtinction ariſes not from the nature of the things themſelves, but from the weakneſs of mankind. Even amongſt men, a ſovereign would unqueſtionably be deemed good, wiſe, and juſt, who knew how to puniſh ſo as not only to prevent tranſgreſſions, hinder the ſpreading of vice, and maintain order, peace, and ſecurity throughout his dominions, but likewiſe to amend the criminal himſelf, and render him an inſtrument of his own happineſs, and an uſeful member of ſociety, by the ſame puniſhment which ſerved as a warning to others. But if this cannot be done, and the ſovereign, by ſhewing kindneſs to a ſingle criminal, muſt do an injury to the whole community, in preferring the leſs to the greater good, being unable, from his limited power, to prevent the extenſion of vice, but by the ſacrifice of the guilty; the idea of the juſtice of puniſhing, as a virtue in the ſovereign,

ſovereign, originates in his want of power; a juſtice, which, though beneficial to the whole, is a hardſhip to the party that ſuffers, and conſequently not ſo perfect and good as it would be, were it at the ſame time beneficial to ſociety, and to the offender. Let it not be ſuppoſed, that this inability to correct in every caſe of puniſhment is ſo univerſal as to extend to God: it is proper to man alone, and proceeds from the following cauſes. We have not time, ſpace, and means ſufficient ſo multifariouſly to diverſify our corrections, as to place the offender in as many various unpleaſing ſituations as are requiſite ultimately to bring him to a ſerious reflection on his real good and permanent attention to it. We cannot render his puniſhment ſo intenſe as to make the deſired impreſſion upon him, without its becoming fatal. Finally, too, we are perſuaded, that certain offenders, particularly dangerous ones, muſt be puniſhed with death, if we ſeek the ſecurity of ſociety. Would ſlighter puniſhments ſerve in ſuch caſes, puniſhments that would not deſtroy the tranſgreſſor, but preſerve him an uſeful member of ſociety, no rational or well-minded man would juſtify capital puniſhments, but hold them equally pernicious and deteſtable. We may even hope, that, when the benevolent and more enlightened eye of philoſophy ſhall have inſpected that important part of legiſlation, the diſtribution of puniſhments, this will become leſs and leſs deſtructive, without being leſs efficacious, and be gradually converted into correction of offenders. Unleſs we aſcribe human weakneſs, and the ſhackles of humanity, to that all-wiſe and omnipotent God, whoſe moral ſovereignty over his intelligent creatures is not confined to the narrow limits of time, who has unnumbered and to us inſcrutable ways of leading his ſubjects to his purpoſes, who, ſince they actually are and muſt eternally remain dependent on him, can place them in ſuch circumſtances that his deſigns in them,

them, and through them in others, muſt be accompliſhed, we are forced to allow, that with reſpect to him our diſtinction betwixt puniſhment and correction is inapplicable, and that all his puniſhments at leaſt may be at the ſame time corrections. And ſince this may be, we ought, from the perfection of his benevolence, to expect, that ſo it will be.

The happineſs of mankind, will it be ſaid again on the other hand, requires a conſtant compariſon with its oppoſite. If then there be intelligent beings upon the whole happy, there muſt be others on the whole unhappy, or the former would want a ſtandard by which to meaſure their happineſs. They would not know their good, and, in the enjoyment of it, that exalted taſte would fail which muſt give them a balance of happineſs. If it be true, as experience ſeems to ſhew, that what we name pleaſure is only known and eſtimated by compariſon, and indeed by compariſon with its oppoſite, it would be impoſſible for Almighty Goodneſs, to give bleſſed ſpirits that exalted degree of happineſs which they derive from compariſon, by any other means than by contraſting them with miſerable ones. Should it be ſaid, that envy and malice are the true grounds of this high taſte of happineſs; this it muſt be confeſſed is in many inſtances the caſe with man, but it would be making the concluſion too general. Contraſt undeniably does great ſervice where its effect is unmixed. Compariſon ſets this thing on one ſide, and that on the other, and to our minds at leaſt this proceſs is familiar. The valetudinarian fancies himſelf in health when he finds a man ſtill more diſeaſed. The poor man thinks himſelf wealthy when he meets a beggar. Joy and ſorrow, happineſs and miſery, friendſhip and hatred, are mutually increaſed by compariſon. We muſt confeſs, that envy and malice frequently mingle in our contemplation of the happineſs or miſery of our neighbours, and carry an innocent propenſity of nature to

an immoderate and pernicious height. Still it is not to be maintained, that all thoſe pleaſures which we derive from an advantageous compariſon with their oppoſites, or to ſpeak with more preciſion, the augmentation of our happineſs from comparing it with that of others, muſt be excluded from true happineſs. Is our philanthropy ſtifled when we ſee others unhappy, not being ſo ourſelves? As long as the conſciouſneſs of ſelf remains, whenever happineſs in ourſelves is contraſted with miſery in our neighbour, they will heighten each other, and we ſhall involuntarily return from the unpleaſing contemplation of our unhappy neighbour to the more joyful proſpect of our own happineſs, with a pleaſure that will be at leaſt felt, however obſcurely.

To this ſpecious argument for ſacrificing a part to the whole may be replied. If our pleaſures become more ſenſible and lively through the contemplation of a want of them, or of their reverſe, in others, we muſt ſtifle the ſentiment of benevolence towards our neighbour in our minds at leaſt as long as the compariſon of advantage laſts: for as ſoon as that ſentiment becomes predominant, and excites true compaſſion, the increaſed taſte of our own happineſs would be depreſſed and over-ruled by the painful participation of the miſery of others. At leaſt this pleaſure ariſing from an advantageous compariſon would ever become more and more inſipid to a perſon in proportion as he was leſs ſelfiſh aud the more his heart expanded with benevolence and compaſſion, till at length, as theſe ſentiments increaſed, it would be totally loſt in a ſenſation of pain. At ſight of the ſufferings of congenial ſouls, every ſufficiently enlarged mind muſt endure what a huſband, a parent, would feel from the miſery of a wife or child. If the virtue and benevolence of happy intelligences have attained this height, their pleaſures can no longer be augmented by compariſon with foreign miſery (to them,

them, indeed, no one's miſery would be foreign) nay, it would be diminiſhed and deſtroyed by it. This exalted benevolence is by no means chimerical, or unattainable to man. The aim of all the inſtructions we receive from God by his moral government in the courſe of nature, and by revelation, is to lead us to an exalted benevolence, and from the love of ſelf to that of God and our fellow-creatures. Experience teaches us this in the examples of religious and good men, whoſe hearts have been enlarged and benevolence increaſed through the aid of religion, which muſt naturally follow from ſtudying the doctrines of chriſtianity, and imitating the univerſal benevolence of God, and the love of our Redeemer. The happineſs of man requires a compariſon, to be felt as happineſs with the greateſt force. That is true. But ſo far as this compariſon is neceſſary and efficacious to the perception of pleaſure, experience of our own miſery or even an inferior degree of happineſs will ſuffice. This indeed, it ſeems, ought not to be wanting, if we would properly value our actual happineſs. But if we eſtimate our happineſs from our own experience of the want of it, or of its reverſe, the compariſon of it with the miſery of others would be ſuperfluous. Neither could it ſupply the abſence of our own experience: for he who has felt no pain can receive no deep or laſting impreſſion from the ſufferings of another. Beſides, ſhould we be accuſtomed to behold the ſufferings of others, they would gradually ceaſe to effect the propoſed end. In proceſs of time we ſhould be as little moved by them, as an European in the American plantations is by thoſe of a negro; or find our pleaſures as little exalted by them, as thoſe of the planter by the miſeries he inflicts, ſo common though ſo diſgraceful to human nature. As the latter is accuſtomed to conſider the ſuffering ſlave as a creature of an inferior order, and no way to be compared with himſelf, we may preſume, that happy

beings would look on their fellow-creatures condemned to eternal misery in a similar point of view, and as beings with whom they could admit of no compariſon. But ſhould their ſympathy be not wholly deſtroyed, and the ſorrows of the miſerable make ſome impreſſion upon them, ſome painful ſenſations muſt at leaſt mix with their ſelfiſh pleaſure, and abate the pride of their triumph.

Let us now conſider what may be ſaid in oppoſition to this. In the firſt place, every painful ſenſation, and thus the painful ſenſation of compaſſion, does not abſolutely leſſen the ſum of happineſs, ſince there are painful ſenſations of ſuch a nature as by contraſt to produce greater pleaſure, and increaſe its intenſity. This is ſtill more the caſe with compaſſion, perhaps, the leſs the compaſſionate can baniſh from their minds the ſenſe of their own perfection; and the more they obſerve the imperfect ſtate of the unhappy, the more is this ſenſe augmented. Let us take a more narrow inſpection of the various effects of compaſſion. What paſſes in the mind of a virtuous man, when ſome near relation, notwithſtanding every caution, perſeveres in diſſipating his patrimony in debauchery, and finally, has broken a limb? He will pity his miſconduct; and its unfortunate conſequences. But he will ſay: he has met with his deſerts: it was his own ſeeking: and he will be more inclined to withdraw his hand from the undeſerving wretch, than to relieve his wants. How different would his ſenſations be, if a worthy friend, journeying to do ſome good action, ſhould be plundered, and wounded to death by robbers! How would his ſoul ſhudder! What would he not do, to teſtify his compaſſion, and give him aſſiſtance! Now is not the pain he feels in the latter caſe far greater than that in the former? And what is it that makes it ſo? No doubt the ideas of innocence and merit, and the attachment founded thereon. What, on the other hand, makes the unfortunate

fortunate wicked man more indifferent to him? Nothing but the inferiority of his worth, and his having deſerved his fate. Let us apply this to the bleſſed and the damned. Suppoſe the latter, in their wretched ſtate, to have nothing amiable annexed to their mental faculties, and to experience a ſevere but merited fate, would the compaſſion of the bleſſed ariſe to ſuch a height as to cauſe a conſiderable defalcation of their happineſs? Would not rather the pain be abundantly compenſated by the heightened conſciouſneſs of their own perfections?

To this the following replication may be made. If the ſum of happineſs be not leſſened by compaſſion, this muſt be proportionably feeble, and the fruit of a ſlight degree of benevolence. Innumerable inſtances occur, in which our own pleaſures would be perfectly inſipid, were they not participated with ſome beloved object; and we ſhould be inſenſible of happineſs, if this object were irreparably wretched. Frequently, it is true, in contemplating wretchedneſs, its being deſerved, and the want of merit and worth in the ſufferer, enfeeble, or even totally ſuppreſs our compaſſion. But it may be queſtioned; is this juſt? Is ſuch an indifference founded on truth, and a right view of things? And is it conſonant to the exalted and diffuſive benevolence of bleſſed ſpirits? The chriſtian religion, and the conduct of its divine founder, ſurely ſeem not to juſtify ſuch indifference and hardheartedneſs againſt ſuffering guilt. This religion of love expreſsly enjoins its followers a ſincere and active compaſſion, in every caſe of wretchedneſs, in every caſe of want, merited or unmerited. Its divine author holds out to us the example of God, who permits his ſun to ſhine upon the righteous and unrighteous, and who ſends his rain both to the juſt and to the unjuſt; by imitation of ſuch examples ſhall we prove ourſelves children of our common Father, who ſhews mercy to all his

works. He himſelf has ſhewn compaſſion on the moſt obdurate ſinners, and wept over the blind, the hardened Jeruſalem. He has no where ſet any bounds to the effective compaſſion of his children with regard to ſuffering guilt, or to their endeavours to relieve the unhappy, but thoſe which flow from their own inability. Let it not be ſaid, that theſe notions of compaſſion and benevolence which the chriſtian religion endeavours to excite and maintain in her followers, reſpect only our preſent weakneſs and imperfection. She will not, whilſt conducting and faſhioning us to eternal happineſs, cheriſh in our minds notions that would be injurious to us in eternity, and which muſt be ſuppreſſed the moment we enter its confines. Were compaſſion a weakneſs, that we muſt eradicate to attain a higher degree of perfection, the man Chriſt Jeſus, the pattern of divine excellence, would have been exempt from compaſſion. He unqueſtionably was capable of eſtimating moſt juſtly the worth of every man: yet ſtill the greateſt ſinner was ſufficiently precious in his eyes to call forth the utmoſt zeal for his converſion. If the bleſſed be like him, their benevolence muſt be as extenſive, and their compaſſion equally embrace every unhappy being. If we trace the ſource of compaſſion, we ſhall find it originate in the ſimilarity of nature, and the ſimilarity of ſenſation, of creatures ſuffering what we ourſelves ſhould ſuffer in like circumſtances. Similarity of ſenſation ſeems to be, if not the ſole, yet the prime ſource of compaſſion. Where we obſerve in thoſe who ſuffer the ſame feelings as we ſhould experience ourſelves, if there be no intervening obſtacle, our compaſſion is naturally excited. It ſignifies nothing to the point in queſtion what we aſſume as the efficient means of producing compaſſion, or what as the final cauſe of it: it is ſufficient for our purpoſe, that the miſery of creatures bearing ſome affinity to

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us is alone ſufficient to produce it. If miſery felt by a mind ſimilar to our own excite compaſſion, and if the greater this miſery is the ſtronger this compaſſion, in an exalted ſtate of benevolence, muſt be; the miſery of the ſufferer being rendered moſt exquiſite by being himſelf the cauſe of it, the ſame circumſtance muſt add poignancy to our ſympathizing grief. The oppoſite apathy ſeems neither conſonant to the deſign of our Creator, nor founded on truth and a juſt notion of things. Were the deſign with which compaſſion was implanted in us merely this, that we ſhould aſſiſt ſuch ſufferers only as were ſo not by their own faults, and leave unaſſiſted all thoſe who had brought their miſery on themſelves, the far greater number of thoſe who ſuffered moſt, who brought on their miſery by ignorance, prejudice, or vicious conduct, nay thoſe who after a long ſeries of good and virtuous actions fell into misfortunes from a ſingle error, would have no claim to our compaſſion or aſſiſtance. Should any one fall at the firſt trial, we muſt conſider it as unjuſt to put him to further proof, and leave him without pity to the wretchedneſs he has deſerved. The ſtrongeſt demonſtration of an active love, the endeavouring to recover a ſoul from perdition, would, on this ſuppoſition, be repugnant to the deſign of our Creator. Farther, ſince nothing is without a cauſe, we muſt alſo admit, that the unhappineſs of a man, be he an agent in it or not, muſt have its cauſe external to him, muſt have its efficient cauſe in the whole ſeries of preceding circumſtances, and its final cauſe in all that ever was or will be. If the univerſe form one great whole, if all things be dependent on, originate from, and relate to one another, and on this account be what they are, the extreme blindneſs and obduracy of the miſerable is an unhappineſs founded on the general connection of things. We muſt deny this whole connection, make man inde-

pendent of the Almighty Creator and Ruler of the world, aſcribe to him a ſpecies of omnipotence, by means of which he can produce out of nothing ſomething not founded on the creation, through a volition likewiſe founded on nothing, or we muſt ſubject him to chance, which would in no wiſe juſtify our notion of a guilt unworthy compaſſion. If we admit not theſe, we muſt allow, that the moſt guilty wretch is a ſacrifice, and predeſtined as well to his moral depravity, as to his ſtate of miſery. He would not, it is true, be unconditionally predeſtined to the latter, without reſpect to the former. But if I aſk, why is he miſerable? and it be anſwered, becauſe he was guilty: I ſhall aſk farther, why was he guilty? Whatever efficient cauſes be aſſigned for this, they muſt ultimately arrive at ſomething external to man's moral nature, and cannot be founded on a depravity of this, as I ſhould ſtill go on to inquire into the firſt cauſe of this depravity, which could not poſſibly be explained from itſelf. If this be true, they, who in their inquiries trace men's actions up to their cauſes, would aſcribe no particular merit to them, were they ever ſo perfect and happy, and would perceive their imperfect and unhappy fellows not unworthy compaſſion according to our general ideas of demerit. Such a perception of truth we may eaſily preſume bleſſed and perfect ſpirits to poſſeſs. Here the ſphere of our view is circumſcribed. We content ourſelves with diſcovering the proximate cauſes of vicious actions, that lie in the moral nature of man, confining or extending our benevolence and compaſſion according to this ſhort-ſighted glance. Suppoſing that we do not clearly ſee, and ſo miſtake the truth, it is of no ſmall advantage to us, that, in our judgment of human actions, we thus ſtop at their proximate cauſes. But were the true philoſopher to exerciſe his compaſſion preferably towards unfortunate virtue, he muſt forget,

get, that the virtuous man cannot be truly unfortunate, and thus in a certain degree renounce his philoſophy, or he muſt refuſe his effective compaſſion to the wicked in miſery, from having no hopes of being able really to ſerve him. Still ſuch an one he muſt ever with juſtice lament.

In behalf of the eternity of the miſery and puniſhment of thoſe who rebel againſt the kingdom of God, it may be further alleged, that it is neceſſary, to confirm the good and happy in their virtue and happineſs. The virtue of all finite beings ſeems to be of ſuch a fragile and unſtable nature, as only to be maintained by the exemplary warning of guilty wretchedneſs, and the terrifying picture of the miſeries attending vice. Puniſhments then are as neceſſary throughout all eternity, to prevent diſorder, rebellion, and the diſſemination of pride and wickedneſs, and to teach vain and arrogant creatures their dependence on God, as they are in this world. If this be the caſe, it proves the ſuppoſition, of a neceſſary exception to univerſal good, to be true. Not only to heighten the happineſs of the virtuous muſt ſome be ſacrificed, and condemned to a balance of miſery, but to render that happineſs generally poſſible, or at leaſt to maintain and ſecure it.

To this principle may be oppoſed the following. Puniſhments in themſelves and immediately make no man virtuous. They can do nothing but reſtrain the propagation of vice, and impel men to certain external actions, where they would not be attentive or provident enough ſufficiently to reflect, and by means of ſuch reflection, and the omiſſion of accuſtomed pernicious actions which it would produce, enfeeble and deſtroy their propenſity to theſe, and acquire a promptitude to thoſe, thus ultimately rendering the former diſagreeable and the latter agreeable to the mind. They who take warning from the puniſhment of others, are influenced by fear to avoid

avoid a ſimilar conduct. Thoſe, then, to whom examples of punition are edifying and neceſſary, muſt be ſtill vicious; at leaſt they muſt have no ſuch inclination to virtue as is founded on a knowledge of its excellence, or a ſenſe of its fitneſs and beauty. They muſt as yet have acquired no taſte for it. A man practiſes it not freely, or of his own powers, whilſt fear is the ſole or ſtrongeſt link which binds him to it. He is therefore but a child in virtue, a mere beginner, and very imperfect compared with the virtuous man, who is ſo voluntarily, and from a conviction that virtue is happineſs. Now as even in this imperfect ſtate we ſee examples of virtuous men, who are not ſo from fear of puniſhment, but from a real love of goodneſs, we cannot but ſuppoſe, that the virtue of thoſe intelligent beings whom God will reward with eternal bliſs muſt find every thing neceſſary to ſecure it, in the perception of their actual happineſs, in the remembrance of the lower degree of it which they felt when they were leſs virtuous, and in the proſpect of its ever increaſing with their increaſing virtue; whence they will need no warning, no image of terror. This view of the caſe is alſo expreſsly propounded in ſcripture, particularly in thoſe memorable words of the apoſtle John: *fear is not in love, but perfect love excludes fear. For fear gives pain. But whoſo feareth is not perfect in love.* This is what we have been maintaining. Fear can be neceſſary only to thoſe who have juſt entered the paths of virtue, to make them overcome the difficulties they will have to encounter on their firſt ſteps in this to them unbeaten way, by the proſpect of ſtill greater ones that they muſt meet if they deviate from it, thus countervailing their impatience, and aptitude to be diſcouraged. But the farther they advance, the leſs will they need fear, to induce them to proceed ſteadfaſtly, and with perſeverance. Every difficulty, againſt which fear was the weapon to be employed,

employed, will diminiſh: the path will become ſmooth, and eaſy to their feet: and they will find it ſo excellent and agreeable, that pleaſure will redouble their ſpeed. Then will they wonder, that thoſe terrifying objects were neceſſary to impel them to ſeek their own happineſs, and be aſhamed of their folly. As ſoon as we know God and virtue, we cannot but love virtue and God: and in the ſame degree does fear vaniſh, for fear is incompatible with a perfect love of God and virtue. As it is our duty in this world to ſtrive after a love that excludes fear, which is by no means unattainable here, we may eaſily admit, that happy beings ſo love as to know no fear, or, which is the ſame thing, that their virtue needs no longer being ſecured by the warning example of vice in wretchedneſs. Otherwiſe, indeed, the virtue of theſe happy beings muſt be as feeble, forced, and imperfect, as the probity of a man who could not be reſtrained from thieving but by the conſtant ſpectacle of robbers hanging upon the gibbet before his eyes.

Finally, for the condemnation of a part, may be adduced the experience, that, in this world, the welfare of one man is often founded on the ruin of another, and that the happineſs of one is the unhappineſs of another. With reſpect to certain earthly advantages at leaſt, this is true. But as the poſſeſſion of theſe does not conſtitute the proper happineſs of man, and as we may be diſcontented whilſt in poſſeſſion of an abundance of them, and contented under a want of them, if not extreme, no concluſion can be drawn from this experience. A variance or colliſion may ariſe between men's inclinations and wiſhes reſpecting the goods of fortune, whilſt the number of thoſe goods which they covet is ſo confined, that it is inſufficient to ſatisfy all, and what augments the poſſeſſions of one diminiſhes thoſe of another. But, as experience teaches us, that on which true happi-

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neſs is founded, is not ſo ſcarce, that, like wealth, honour, and power, it can only be participated by a few at the expence of the many. If, as Pope juſtly obſerves, health, peace, and competence, alone conſtitute man's earthly happineſs, the happineſs of one individual does not require to be purchaſed at the expence of another. An accurate attention to the frame of men's minds teaches us, that all, notwithſtanding the variety of their external circumſtances, enjoy a very ſimilar, if not an equal degree of happineſs: thus analogy ſeems to decide againſt this hypotheſis. Surely the benevolence of the moſt perfect being, the Father of all his creatures, cannot be ſo circumſcribed, as not to embrace all the beings he has created; nor can he be ſo poor in happineſs as to be unable to make all his children happy.

PROP. VI. p. 31. Before the Corollary.

On the Immateriality of God.

The proofs of the immateriality of God here adduced by Hartley are liable to ſome not unfounded objections; particularly the firſt. This is derived from the *vis inertiæ* as the fundamental property of matter. From this fundamental property is matter merely paſſive; conſequently, the grounds and cauſe of its motion are not in itſelf, but in an eſſence which is not matter. The firſt poſition is taken from experience, that all the active powers of matter, as they are termed, preſuppoſe the *vis inertiæ*, by means of which alone the exerciſe of thoſe active powers is poſſible. In my opinion, this proof is deficient both in ſtrength and perſpicuity. Our author has not ſufficiently explained what he means by *vis inertiæ*.

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Is it the power of reſiſting every motion, or only a certain determinate motion? In the firſt caſe only can it be ſaid, that matter is merely paſſive; not in the laſt. But then matter never could be properly active, and all its active powers as they are called, which appear to be exerted, would be nothing but immediate impreſſions of ſome power of an immaterial eſſence, and itſelf would have no power to act, or to reſiſt. For what is reſiſtance but a power acting againſt another power? And do not paſſion, and the capability of paſſion, preſuppoſe a capability of action? We may, therefore, with more juſtice, term the *vis inertiæ* a power of reſiſting a certain determinate motion. And, indeed, it ſeems to be nothing but the power of motion itſelf, which, being always determinate in its exertion, muſt neceſſarily reſiſt every other motion which oppoſes ſuch determinate exertion. Thus the power of reſiſtance is only poſſible from the power of motion: in other words, the *vis inertiæ* is not the firſt power conceivable of matter. It preſuppoſes the power of moving itſelf, and is nothing more than a modification of that power. Thus, for example, a ſtone reſiſts the power that would impreſs on it an horizontal motion, becauſe it poſſeſſes gravity, or a power of moving itſelf towards the centre of the earth. Now, that this direction of its moving power is the ground of its reſiſtance to that power which would give its motion another direction is evident from this, that its reſiſtance is always proportional to the quantity of its gravity, or the force of its determinate moving power. Thus we muſt conclude, that, if it exerted no determinate moving power, and indeed poſſeſſed no ſuch power, it would exert no reſiſtance; or, in other words, if matter had no active power, it would have no power of being paſſive. Hence, as we muſt conceive the point in queſtion, the power of motion muſt be the firſt mode of matter, and the power of reſiſtance

reſiſtance the ſecond, ſince the latter preſuppoſes and includes the former, and ſince we muſt abſolutely deny all power to matter, unleſs we grant it an original power of moving itſelf. Our author, indeed, inverts the propoſition; maintaining, that all motion is poſſible only by preſuppoſing a *vis inertiæ*; and that the active party which generates gravitation, magnetiſm, and the like in the paſſive one, muſt have a motion, and a *vis inertiæ*, whereby it endeavours to perſiſt in that motion, elſe it could effect nothing. But motion and *vis inertiæ* are here the ſame thing, ſo that this amounts to juſt what I have aſſerted, namely, that the power, which in one point of view is a moving power, in another, and oppoſite view, is the power of reſiſtance. If this be ſo, as long as the original power is exerted in a determinate manner, it muſt reſiſt every other direction, or the body muſt perſiſt in the motion begun. But if motion and *vis inertiæ* be two different things, no grounds for their diſtinction are to be found. If a certain determinate motion be once begun, the continuance of that motion requires no new power diſtinct from the firſt original one, whereon ſuch motion was founded, and by which it was determined. If this be juſt, the firſt argument for the immateriality of God, deduced from the *vis inertiæ*, falls to the ground.

The ſecond proof of the immateriality of God from his infinite intelligence preſuppoſes the principle, that a blind unintelligent cauſe, acting either according to no laws, or to laws contradictory to the effects to be produced, cannot generate intelligent being, much leſs the higheſt and moſt perfect intelligence.

What our author oppoſes to the difficulty of our conceiving an immaterial eſſence deſerves our attention. We have, indeed, no original ideas, ſays he, but what are impreſſed by matter: whence we are led

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to conclude, that nothing but matter exiſts. But as we cannot explain the moſt ordinary and ſimple phænomena from our idea of matter, we muſt either admit an immaterial ſubſtance, or elſe ſuppoſe, that matter has ſome powers and properties different from, and ſuperior to thoſe which appear. But this laſt ſuppoſition is in effect the ſame as the firſt, though, on account of the imperfection of language, it ſeems to be different. Our author here ſpeaks of the origin of our idea of immateriality. It muſt coſt the human mind great efforts to exalt itſelf to this idea, which is probably the higheſt flight ever taken by the underſtanding. This is unqueſtionably the reaſon why we find no clear traces of a ſimple idea of it amongſt the ancient philoſophers. The diſcovery of it was the work of modern times, and in all likelihood the fruit of an earneſt and continued reflection on the nature of God. Inaſmuch as this reflection preſuppoſes an antecedent, rational, and pure idea of God, and it was requiſite, that a weighty and important idea of God muſt firſt be formed in order to raiſe man up to this reflection, the enriching of philoſophy with the idea of immateriality may be aſcribed to the beneficial influence of the chriſtian religion. This obligation would philoſophy have to chriſtianity, even though the doctrine of immateriality were not expreſsly taught in the ſcriptures; and its being ſo may at leaſt be queſtioned, ſince the firſt teachers of it, or many of the fathers at leaſt, found not this idea therein, but always formed corporeal notions of God. Our inability to explain the phænomena of nature, and in particular the faculties of mind, from the known and admitted properties of matter, in all probability, led philoſophers, who found groſs matter inſufficient to this explanation, to imagine a more and ſtill more ſubtile matter, till finding, that, however ſubtile it were ſuppoſed, it would ſtill be matter, and thus incapable of making us comprehend the effects which they

they would willingly have explained, they ultimately denied the exiſtence of all matter, thus at leaſt arriving at a negative idea. Now as the human underſtanding cannot be ſatisfied with a mere negative idea, this was advancing nothing more, than that what produces properties and effects, not explicable by or conſiſtent with our ideas of matter, is not matter: but to make this idea affirmative and real we muſt not only ſay what it is not, but alſo determine what it is. As long as we admit, that matter is a reality, we cannot admit its oppoſite to be a reality alſo; hence all the realities that we aſcribe to an immaterial ſubſtance, when for inſtance we term it a ſimple thing, are nothing but words of the ſame meaning as immateriality whereby in effect nothing new is advanced. Of this Leibnitz was aware, and, to extricate himſelf from the embarraſſment, conſidered matter and extenſion, as they ſtrike our ſenſes, to be appearances, refuſing them the appellation of real ſubſtance, and deeming them the reſult of the action of many ſubſtances, which, not being diſtinguiſhable by our ſenſes, appeared to them as one, and indeed, as it muſt be in all ſuch appearances, as a whole, altogether diſſimilar to and diſtinct from its component parts. Theſe component parts, or rather thoſe things which conſtitute the baſis of this appearance, are, according to this theory, not farther compounded, but abſolutely ſimple and indiviſible. But as this idea of ſimple ſubſtance is to our conception another negative idea, in order to make it affirmative, he muſt give it ſome power, whence it would become real. Now this power which he gave it, was the power of perception, for of every other power it might be ſaid, that it was only an appearance, as matter itſelf in which the power was ſuppoſed, and this would apply perhaps even to the power of motion itſelf. The ſimple power of perception alone is not expoſed to this application. It can be no appear-

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ance, ſince an appearance always preſuppoſes a power of perception which repreſents a thing otherwiſe than it is, and we muſt alſo ſuppoſe, that the power of perception in one thing was produced by the power of perception in another, which is abſurd. Leibnitz alſo maintains, that it is eaſy to explain all the phænomena we admit in matter from this original perceptive power of all its component parts, their various alterations and degrees, their actions and reactions. This theory, indeed, may appear chimerical to thoſe who blindly rely on the teſtimony and illuſion of their ſenſes; and this explanation, advanced by Leibnitz as poſſible, though not, as far as I know, confirmed, cannot be propoſed to the world, were it diſcovered, as a ſatisfactory means of filling up the wide chaſm between phyſics and metaphyſics, of making out the tranſition from one to the other, and uniting the two ſciences together. Still muſt this notion be conſidered at leaſt as an ingenious hypotheſis, the impoſſibility of which is not to be demonſtrated, and whereby the idea of immateriality is palpably freed from the objection, that it is merely negative, no true idea, and a word without meaning: it removes the contradiction, that matter and its oppoſite are both equally realities, and in particular defends and ſecures the immateriality of God, from the objection, that it admits of no conception. To be aware of what Leibnitz has hereby done, and properly to eſtimate the value of his hypotheſis, we muſt be acquainted with the difficulty which he ſought to remove. That difficulty, as has been obſerved, conſiſts in this, that ſince matter is, as far as appears to us, a true and real thing, ſpirit, or an immaterial thing, being the oppoſite to it, cannot poſſibly be true and real, whence all real things, and conſequently the moſt real of all things, God himſelf, muſt be matter. But ſince the idea of God as a ſelf-exiſtent and neceſſary being abſolutely leads

us to the idea of his immutability, and theſe three ideas are ſo ſtrictly and inſeparably connected, that we muſt either admit or reject the whole; and ſince the idea of immutability is in direct contradiction to the idea of a compounded ſubſtance, or matter; we muſt either grant immateriality to the immutable being, or, if we ſuppoſe him to be material, we muſt give up the fundamental notions we have of God, namely, his ſelf-exiſtence, neceſſity, and immutability, that is, we muſt reject all rational ideas of him.

Our author ſeems, in part at leaſt, to grant this, when he ſays, that to admit an immaterial ſubſtance, or to ſuppoſe that matter poſſeſſes certain powers and properties of a nature different from and ſuperior to thoſe we perceive in it, is the ſame thing. But if theſe two ſuppoſitions ſignify the ſame thing, we muſt admit, not only that the properties and powers commonly aſcribed to matter are unable to afford us the deſired explanation, but that it requires ſuch powers and properties as are contradictory to our ideas of matter, and thus not merely undiſcoverable by us, but abſolutely not to be found in it. This will at leaſt be the caſe if we would explain the idea of a neceſſary and ſelf-exiſtent being from the idea of matter, and unite thoſe ideas in our imagination. In ſuch a caſe we muſt firſt admit the mere negative idea of immateriality, and whilſt we adhere to this, it muſt be confeſſed, that the two ſuppoſitions adduced are equivalent. It is the ſame thing, whether I ſay: there are ſubſtances that are not material, or ſubſtances which have powers and properties whereby we may explain what is not comprehenſible from our ideas of matter and its powers, or, I muſt aſcribe to matter properties and powers, which are not only of a different nature from thoſe ordinarily admitted, but even of an oppoſite nature, and not to be conceived of it. If, however, we would go farther, and make

make the idea of immateriality affirmative, we imperceptibly fall into the Leibnitzian hypotheſis of ſubſtance and power. We muſt firſt in ſome ſort admit, according to our uſual mode of thinking, that theſe different and oppoſite powers, or rather power (for they may conveniently be reduced to one) exiſt in ſome ſubſtance, or a ſubject diſtinct from the power. But then we ſhould indeed think nothing, ſince the word immateriality preſents to us no real idea, and ſuch a ſubject is no where to be found. Nothing then remains for us, but to take the power itſelf for the ſubſtance. This is in effect ſomething real, and in it, and no where elſe, find we what can realiſe our idea of immateriality. This, in fact, ſeems to be the natural and immediate road which the human underſtanding muſt take, when it would convert immateriality from an empty ſound to an actual idea: and if this be the only way by which we can arrive at ſuch an idea, it is certainly a juſtification of, and argument for the Leibnitzian hypotheſis.

PROP. XI. p. 41.

On the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God.

It is juſtly remarked by our author, that our ideas of the attributes of God, both of thoſe which are termed natural and thoſe which are termed moral, though they can neither be pure nor complete, are not contradictory to truth and reality. The general ideas, when we ſeparate them as much as poſſible from all human limitations and imperfection, muſt in fact be true and real, as far as the human underſtanding can know and diſtinguiſh truth from falſehood. Wiſdom and benevolence, for inſtance, are ſuch ideas, the origin and derivation of which

are clear, which are founded on ſomething actual, have an actual object, and are in ſome meaſure more conceivable to us than the ideas of ſelf-exiſtence and infinity, as we have ſome impreſſion of them, though a faint one, in ourſelves. That theſe ideas do not fully anſwer to their object will readily be admitted: yet it by no means follows, that we do not ſee the truth, but that we do not ſee the whole truth. It by no means follows, that benevolence and goodneſs in God are different from, and oppoſite to what we term ſo in ourſelves, whilſt in him they are more than we can know or comprehend. That part of thoſe divine attributes which lies hidden from our eyes cannot poſſibly contradict and annihilate that which we perceive, but we muſt rather preſume, that, could we attain a more extenſive view of thoſe attributes, our ideas of them, as far as we have derived them from experience, and the nature of created things, according to the rules of right reaſon, would indeed be extended, exalted, and rendered more pure, but altogether confirmed in the abſtract. Were it poſſible to ſuppoſe, that our imperfect ideas of God's attributes were altogether falſe and uncertain, ſo that what we term wiſdom and benevolence in man would be by no means wiſdom and benevolence in God, all natural religion would be done away, nor could we have the leaſt advantage to hope from revelation. This would deprive us of the touch-ſtone by which true revelation is to be diſtinguiſhed from falſe, it would expoſe us naked and defenceleſs to the ſeduction of artful knaves or fanatic fools, nay it would rob us of the very idea of a God: for what idea could we have of God, if we muſt not ſuppoſe him powerful, wiſe, and good, in any human ſenſe of the words? Thus he would not be in any ſenſe to us; conſequently, with reſpect to us, he would not exiſt. The ſame circumſpection we muſt with juſtice uſe, if we would deduce and demonſtrate

ſtrate *a priori* our theological ſuppoſitions of the attributes of God; a circumſpection rendered neceſſary by our defective knowledge of theſe attributes, from which we are unable to determine what is ſuitable to them in particular caſes: as juſt and valid on the contrary muſt be that proof, which ſhews the falſity of an idea or a propoſition from its evident contradiction to the attributes of God, and our general notions of them. Theſe general notions muſt abſolutely conſtitute the firſt principles of theology, and it is our duty to reject whatever is repugnant to them; though it is no leſs audacious, to attempt to infer *a priori* all that God does, or will do, from theſe general notions.

The doctrine of Providence, wherein however no little perplexity prevails, and ſo many uſeleſs, and, in ſome meaſure, childiſh diſtinctions have been introduced, is clearly and conciſely laid down by our author. He admits the diviſion into general and particular providence, but explains himſelf in a way ſo conſonant to the Deity, that particular providence includes no greater or more abſolute care of God for its object, but that both general and particular providence are the ſame act of God, only receiving different appellations from us, according as we conceive it to operate for the good of the whole, or of ſome particular part, but in effect always producing the greateſt good both to the whole, and to each individual part of that whole. When divines ſpeak of the particular providence of God to his children, this diſtinction cannot be founded on particular actions of God, or, it is not to be underſtood that God acts towards theſe in a particular and ſpecific manner; but the whole ground of the diſtinction muſt lie in the objects of this particular providence, inaſmuch as from their righteous frame they are more capable than others of rejoicing in the general exertions of divine providence, and of embracing and

feeling the influence of God's benevolence. This explanation removes all the ſuperficial objections made to a particular providence.

PROP. XII. p. 45. Before "In like manner."

On the moral Senſe.

Our author here refers to what he had ſaid of the moral ſenſe, and its origin, in the former part of his work (Prop. XCIX. vol. I. p. 493.); from which it appears, that this ſenſe may be extremely different and various, more perfect or imperfect, and not ſeldom greatly corrupted, in different perſons, according as all the means of producing it, or only certain particular ones are employed. It is eaſy to perceive, likewiſe, that it muſt be ſtronger or more feeble, in proportion as a greater or leſs number of circumſtances concur to produce it. From what he has ſaid, too, it is clear, that the moral ſenſe is of itſelf no preciſe and ſufficient rule of conduct, but muſt ever remain in a great meaſure uncertain and indeterminate, unleſs informed and guided by a rational conception of the attributes, will, and deſign of the Deity, and a general knowledge of what is juſt and unjuſt.

PROP. XIII. p. 48.

On the Connection between natural and revealed Religion.

What our author here ſays of the light and confirmation which natural and revealed religion mutually receive from each other, is ſo warily and deciſively propounded, that it would be difficult to raiſe any objections to it. Still ſomething further explanatory of the ſubject may not be ſuperfluous. Natural and revealed

revealed religion have unqueſtionably their particular and independent proofs. The ordinary phænomena of the world, with the frame and courſe of nature, are the foundations on which are built the arguments for the former: unuſual phænomena, deviations from the frame and courſe of nature, or miracles and true prophecies, conſtitute the particular proofs of the latter. But we muſt admit, that the general conſtitution and occurrences of the world have an inviſible intelligent author, before we can infer ſuch an one from unuſual occurrences. So far only as the unuſual make a ſtronger impreſſion on mankind than the uſual, and a certain blind neceſſity may be conſidered as the cauſe of the latter, with the excluſion of an intelligent author, ſeem the earlieſt of the human race to have derived the notion of an inviſible ſupreme being not ſo much from the wonderful order of the world, and the conſtant and regular courſe of nature, as from deviations from them, and unuſual appearances, that were either real miracles, or conſidered by them as ſuch. If we farther reflect, that the diſcovery of natural religion muſt have been a taſk of tedious and uncommon difficulty to the uncultivated underſtanding of the firſt race of mankind, if left to itſelf, particularly when having to infer the unity of God, a diſcovery that requires a practiſed mind, it muſt appear, that the natural religion of the firſt men was the fruit of unuſual or wonderful occurrences, or, as the Biblical records tell us, of more immediate divine revelation. Theſe wonderful occurrences, whether men were brought by them through fear to the notion and belief of an inviſible power, or were led to it by a more immediate and particular divine revelation, were, to theſe unpractiſed and ignorant reaſoners, the true proofs of their natural religion. Inaſmuch as the greater part of mankind are at all times incapable of obtaining a knowledge of religion from

ratiocination, and their reaſon in fact aſſiſts them no farther than as it enables them to gueſs, that the frame of the world muſt have had a maker, in the ſame manner as any common piece of mechaniſm, without diſcloſing to them any thing preciſe or determinate reſpecting his nature, attributes, and deſigns; revelation, and the announced manifeſtation of God accompanying it, were the principal, if not the ſole foundations both of their natural and revealed religion. In ſuch men it is difficult to diſtinguiſh the two, and they are unqueſtionably indebted to revelation for what may in them be termed natural religion. Thus with reſpect to the far greater number of mankind, it is not only true, that their natural religion is enlightened and confirmed by revealed religion, but alſo that the former receives its exiſtence from the latter. Here the words of the apoſtle; through faith we know, that the world was made by the word of God, have their full force.

Even when we conſider the thinking part of mankind, it is not to be diſputed, that the natural religion with which they are acquainted is much indebted to revelation. That the human underſtanding was ſo early aware of the unity of God, is certainly to be aſcribed to divine information, as it is ſo difficult for enlightened reaſon to diſcover a particular and deciſive demonſtration of it. If we imagine to ourſelves all the ways and methods whereby man could arrive at the notion of a Deity, it muſt appear to us moſt probable, that, in the beginning, and before his reaſon had attained a certain dexterity, he believed a plurality of Gods: and this conjecture is confirmed by the general hiſtory of the remoteſt times. But beſides this, revelation has not only given men more pure, worthy, and perfect ideas of the attributes of God, than prevailed amongſt the moſt enlightened men at the time of its being promulgated, but it has alſo, and particularly

particularly chriſtianity, which has made the notion and belief of a God far more important to mankind than it had ever before appeared, impelled their minds to contemplate this exalted ſubject, and to employ all their combined faculties in this contemplation. Hence it naturally follows, that reaſon has acquired a more extenſive, juſt, and adequate knowledge of the nature, attributes, and deſigns of God, by a reflection thus excited and invigorated, than it ever before poſſeſſed.

Whilſt, however, we acknowledge this ſervice done to natural religion by revelation, we muſt not forget the benefits and advantages accruing to revealed from pure natural religion, and truths eſtabliſhed by reaſon. The light and confirmation derived to the former from the latter may, perhaps not improperly, be thus diſplayed. Let us ſuppoſe, that a code of laws, in every reſpect as perfect as poſſible, was given by an intelligent and benevolent philoſopher to an ignorant and uncultivated people. On the promulgation of it, the wiſeſt heads amongſt this people, who hitherto had formed no ideas of juſtice and injuſtice, or at leaſt very ſlight and imperfect ones, and had framed no ſyſtem of the laws of nature, awaking as it were from a long ſlumber, would firſt be led to ſtudy thoſe laws, inveſtigate their principles, and reflect on juſtice and injuſtice in general. They would at length diſcover by reflection and reaſoning, that they could attain proofs for the excellence of theſe laws, independent of all reſpect for their author, which they at firſt learnt only from the code itſelf, and took upon truſt in him who framed it. Let us alſo ſuppoſe, that the words of this code, however full and careful the inſtructions for guiding the people in the path of juſtice might be, were, through lapſe of time and change of circumſtances, become doubtful, leſs clear, and liable to be miſunderſtood; philoſophy, and the law

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of nature, firſt learnt by means of this code, would render the moſt needful and ſolid ſervice in explaining obſcure and diſputed expreſſions of the law, making a juſt application of general laws to particular caſes, and defeating the miſtakes of ignorance or miſapplications of ſuperſtition. There is nothing abſurd in ſuppoſing, that, whilſt the poſitive law was firſt made known to ſupply the complete want or imperfection of a rational natural law, ſtill, when reaſon had been thereby formed and aſſiſted in the diſcovery and knowledge of the natural law, this reaſon, and the knowledge it had acquired, could and muſt greatly contribute to explain and confirm the poſitive law. This, I ſay, is by no means contradictory. It is actually the caſe in all civilized nations. In ſuch ſtates the general law of nature is inſufficient to maintain rectitude of conduct amongſt their members. Poſitive laws are neceſſary, applicable to each particular ſtate, and the peculiar circumſtances of its people. Yet theſe laws and ordinances can never be ſo clear and perfect, but that it will become requiſite to aſcertain their meaning, to apply them in certain caſes according to the principles of reaſon, and ſometimes to have recourſe to the general expreſſion of the law of nature. Thus, I believe, is it with natural and revealed religion.

For the thinking part of mankind, wonders and prophecies, conſidered in themſelves, are more aſtoniſhing than convincing. The power of convincing us of their divine origin will not, indeed, be denied to theſe peculiar proofs of revelation; they will rather be conſidered as deſerving a ſufficient and neceſſary confirmation. But it will ſtill be thought requiſite to a complete and firm aſſurance of the truth, that the doctrines and tidings which they are intended to confirm bear themſelves the ſeal of truth, and the ſtamp of the Deity. Even the virtuous character of him who delivers theſe tidings and doctrines

doctrines will not render these internal evidences of their truth superfluous: for virtue is not a security against error and self-deception, though it is a presumptive proof of the truth of its doctrines. Thus it seems, thinking people cannot easily attain a confident assurance without having themselves examined and approved the doctrines of revelation. But they can no otherwise prove the decrees of revelation, than by comparing them with that knowledge of God which they derive from reason. So far all revelation requires to be confirmed by natural religion. But since the doctrines of the latter appear to be not sufficiently clear and evident to the greatest part of those who consider them, as they leave doubts and perplexities in their minds, it seems to be the office and benefit of revelation, to confirm and more clearly ascertain the doctrines common to them both by its own peculiar and sufficient proofs, and to bring the mind, disturbed by doubts, to a peaceful assurance in the truth, by the united means of a solid rational faith and its own light and conviction. And the more these two means mutually assist each other, the stronger will their united effects operate to produce peace and confidence.

PROP. XV. p. 56.

On Free-Will.

ARGUMENTS favouring the mechanism of the human mind have already been adduced by our author, in the conclusion of the first part (vol. I. p. 501—3). But the opponents of the free-will defended there, and in Prop. XIV. of this part, will argue from experience, that man possesses another kind of free-will, termed philosophical by Hartley. They say: we feel that we can act differently from the manner in

in which we do act, and this feeling is the higheſt and moſt incontrovertible proof of it. To this Hartley with juſtice replies, that in all important actions of our lives, if we attend to our motives, and thoſe motives be of ſufficient weight, we in effect find, that they were not to be reſiſted, and conſequently have a directly oppoſite feeling. Theſe two points, however, deſerve to be more ſtrictly conſidered.* Man, as having a ſentiment of free-will, may be conſidered in a three-fold point of view: whilſt he is chooſing; when he chooſes; and after he has choſen. To judge properly of the ſentiment we ſpeak of, theſe three ſtates or points of time muſt be accurately diſtinguiſhed. In the firſt ſtate, whilſt a man has not at all or but ſlightly conſidered and compared the grounds of his choice, having only taken a view of them in the groſs, he knows not himſelf what motives will determine him, or to which ſide he ſhall incline. Whilſt he is in this ſtate, and his mind is occupied in conſidering and weighing the motives that offer, he muſt deem a certain action and its oppoſite equally poſſible for him to perform, like as a balance, which has yet no weight in either ſcale and vibrates up and down, may be made to incline to either ſide, according to our precedent judgment. In this ſtate a man has no doubt the ſentiment of free-will, ſince in theſe circumſtances he can chooſe one of two different and oppoſite things: but he has it only becauſe he ſtill heſitates, and is not yet determined. He will determine, however; and this is the ſtate or period of choice. He has now weighed the motives, as far as was ſuitable to his circumſtances, and his mind has received a ſufficient weight to occaſion a preponderance. In this

* See the *Allgemeine Deutſche Bibliothek, Band XII. Stück* 2. S. 304. We have here made uſe of the remarks there offered, in order to elucidate the point in queſtion.

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ſtate he is perfectly conſcious of the motives that determine him, or he is not. If the former, he feels (and to this Hartley refers) that he cannot reſiſt the grounds of his choice, and is aware of the power that rules his determination. But if he be clearly conſcious of no motive, he aſks whether he be, notwithſtanding, determined by a motive, or there be in that caſe no motive, and he were determined without ground or cauſe, and by chance. If the latter be not admitted, and it cannot be denied, that, as ſtrict attention in many inſtances informs us, inclination, deſire, paſſion, and affection, ſo far as they are operations of the mind, are compounded of a number of not ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed, and conſequently not clearly noted, perceptions of good and evil, and that in many caſes, on calm and attentive deliberation, they admit of being decompoſed and reſolved into theſe unnoticed perceptions as into ſo many conſtituent parts; we ought not from a want of clearly perceived motives to infer an abſence of perceptions however obſcure. Philoſophical free-will as it is called, would gain but a very poor advantage, were its exiſtence defenſible only in caſes where man acts not from rational principles, but from luſt and paſſion, and without clearly knowing wherefore. Beſides, a blind chance, by which man is determined, muſt be admitted, inſtead of the proper motives and impulſes of the will, that are denied. But this is not attributing to him an original power of determining himſelf to oppoſite things without any grounds. Even this power is chance, whilſt its determination to A or not A, at the ſame time, and under exactly the ſame circumſtances, is equally poſſible. And this is a power which man finds not in himſelf in the moſt important actions of his life, if he act with reaſon and deliberation.

If man, then, though he be not clearly conſcious of his motives at the moment of choice, be determined

mined by them, which we cannot deny, he actually feels the internal impulſe of deſire and paſſion. But this ſtate endures not long, and is already vaniſhed when we begin ſeriouſly to deliberate on our choice and determination. Deſire and paſſion have then loſt their force, and in this ſtate a man imagines, that he might have rejected that to which he was impelled by them, as he now feels himſelf capable of rejecting it. He confounds the ſtate of his mind after having choſen with the ſtate of it at the moment of choice, and from confounding theſe two very different ſtates alone ariſes the imaginary ſentiment of free-will, or this falſe concluſion from a true ſenſation. Let him be again placed in that ſtate of deſire and paſſion, his ſentiment of free-will again vaniſhes at once. If a man be determined in his choice by motives which he clearly conceives, he will feel the neceſſity of it afterwards, whenever he reflects on thoſe motives; and he will fancy, that he could have choſen otherwiſe only when he is not ſufficiently attentive to all the circumſtances which acted upon his mind. How often do we ſay, when we calmly reflect on ſome important determination made with mature deliberation, that we could not have choſen otherwiſe, and ſhould ſtill make the ſame choice were we again to deliberate! In this caſe, we have not the leaſt ſentiment of free-will, even after the choice. We only find it when the ſtate of our mind after the choice obviouſly differs from what it was during the choice, or when the motives which determined it are not preſent to it on its inveſtigation, and from their nature, having conſiſted of a crowd of obſcure and unobſervable perceptions, which were effaced without leaving any traces behind them, cannot be recalled to remembrance. When the mind chooſes otherwiſe than it had formerly choſen, it retracts its choice, and repents of its former determination. For repentance is nothing more than a retraction of our judgment

judgment with reſpect to a certain deciſion, which, after having taken place, is again examined as if it were yet to do. If a man ſtill made the ſame choice, repentance would be impoſſible. This is the caſe when a man is determined by perceptions that are perfectly clear, or at leaſt nearly ſo. For theſe clear perceptions, on mature reflection on the choice, preſent themſelves to the mind by means of the memory, ſo that its ſtate will be the ſame as when it was determined to the choice. But if the determination followed the impulſe of deſire and paſſion, the force with which deſire and paſſion acted on the mind is wanting on calm reflection. We then find, that our preſent clear perceptions determine us to very different reſolves, and we feel a want of motives to thoſe to which we were impelled by deſire. The mind may be compared to the moſt ſenſible balance that can be conceived. Let the motives that are clearly perceived be conſidered as the weights, and the obſcure ones as the duſt that has ſettled on them, or in the ſcale. This duſt will give a preponderancy to one ſide, not to be explained from the weights themſelves. But the duſt is blown away, we examine the balance again, and find a different reſult. If we had not before noticed the duſt, we cannot conceive how ſuch a difference could ariſe in the ſame balance, and with the ſame weights. So is it with the mind when it firſt determines from paſſion, or obſcure perceptions, and afterwards from clear ones. Hence it is obvious, that the before-mentioned ſentiment of free-will is capable of being explained by the ſyſtem of mechaniſm or neceſſity, and conſequently cannot be deemed an objection to that ſyſtem. From the ſentiment of repentance alone may all kinds and degrees of it be explained from and ingrafted on it. Repentance is, as has been obſerved, nothing but the retraction of our judgment relative to a certain action, or a contrafting

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of the ſtates of the mind during and after choice. As often as ſuch a contraſt takes place, if clear perceptions ſucceed to obſcure ones, or the latter to the former, with reſpect to a certain determination, repentance muſt enſue: hence a man may repent of a good action, as well as a bad one.

It is worth while to inquire how the different modifications of repentance may be explained on the ſyſtem of neceſſity, and the idea here advanced. I ſhall firſt obſerve, that this idea is confirmed by the frame of mind of thoſe who are more or leſs ſubject to repent of their determinations. There are men who feel no repentance, or at leaſt a very ſlight and tranſient one, even for the greateſt miſconduct. Theſe are they in whom the ſtate or ſituation of the mind, which determined them to their vicious actions, is ſo firm and predominant, as not to change for a ſtate of better and more clear perceptions. The mind may have acquired no preciſe ideas of juſtice and injuſtice, virtue and vice, from want of moral inſtructions; or, from long habits of wickedneſs, it may have obtained ſuch a careleſſneſs and indifference, that a man may at length voluntarily ſuppreſs his moral ideas, conſtantly keep up the intoxication of the paſſions, never awake to a ſober deliberation on the conſequences of his determinations, and be totally incapable of attentively looking forwards to the future. In ſuch a ſtate of inſenſibility the mind finds itſelf a ſavage voluptuous ſultan, whom a Voltaire* would conſider as a happy man, becauſe finding a kind of undiſturbed pleaſure in the unbounded ſatisfaction of his brutal luſts. The complete want of moral principles, a deeply rooted prejudice that he is but the ſlave of a ſuperior being, and a brutal confinement of his views to the preſent, ſecure him from the pangs of repentance, and, as far as libera-

* See the article *Happineſs* in the *Dictionnaire Encyclopedique.*

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tion from the ſcourge of that fury can give happineſs, make him happy. The reverſe of this man is he who with a warm conſtitution, headſtrong paſſions, and impetuous deſires, is capable of reflection, poſſeſſes juſt principles and a not unpractiſed moral ſenſe, can be guilty of a bad action, yet not abandoned, as a David for inſtance, can obſcure though not efface better impreſſions when actuated by wild deſires, and can ſuppreſs the fear of God and love of his neighbour for a time, though not for ever. The ſtrong contraſts in ſuch a mind, with the ebbs and flows of paſſion alternating in it continually, explain to us how repentance in all its various degrees, from the ſlighteſt diſturbance to the moſt exquiſite torture, muſt be ſtrikingly diſplayed in it, though not arrived at the higheſt pitch of wickedneſs. That all the repugnant feelings which accompany the rejection of a determination, as ſhame, remorſe, ſelf-condemnation and deſpair, are nothing but repentance in a higher degree, and variouſly modified, is evident, becauſe the rejection of a determination from a change in the ſtate of the mind, and a diſpleaſure founded thereon, are common to them all. According to our principles, repentance muſt be ſtronger or weaker in proportion as the ſtate of the mind during its choice differs more or leſs from its ſtate afterwards. And this is in effect the caſe. The more ſtrongly a man deſires or abhors a thing, which, after having changed his frame of mind, he perceives he ought not to have deſired or abhorred, and the more clearly and certainly he perceives this, the greater the contraſt between the two ſtates of his ſoul, the more ſtriking his variance with himſelf, and the more forcible his repentance. The diſcontent that ariſes from ſuch a variance with himſelf is ordinarily very complicated, and the different circumſtances wherein the agent finds himſelf, with the manifold conſequences enſuing, partly pre-

conceived, partly not, may variouſly alter, magnify, or diminiſh the regret of having embraced a certain determination. But it originally ariſes from our variance with ourſelves, which of itſelf cauſes in us an unpleaſant ſenſation, of the ſame nature as that we experience when our judgment is contradicted, or our conduct blamed by others. This is always painful; and the more ſo, the more we value the judgment of him who contradicts us. Nothing, then, can be more unpleaſing to us, than our not agreeing with ourſelves, and being obliged to withdraw our own approbation, which always implies the want of that of every other perſon. When, however, beſides this, we perceive a preſent or future embarraſſment as the conſequence of our repented determination, the original unpleaſing ſenſation abovementioned is thereby augmented; and it is increaſed in proportion as this conſequence is more or leſs unpleaſant, as we perceive more or leſs clearly, that it ariſes from our precipitate reſolve, and we are more or leſs convinced of its being inevitable. If the determination we reject ſhould have no remarkable conſequences that we can perceive, the pain of repentance will be ſcarcely obſervable. But, if we attend to it, we ſhall find, that it is not totally effaced, even when a reſolve grounded on a judgment which we afterwards perceive to have been erroneous is accidently productive of advantage to us. In this a ſecret impreſſion prevails. The advantageous conſequences which enſue may leſſen it, but they cannot wholly ſuppreſs it, or remove a ſenſe of ſhame at our unmerited fortune. This ſeems to me a clear proof, that the original pain of repentance, and its primitive ſource, ſpring from that variance we are in with ourſelves when we repent of a thing. Repentance ſometimes aſſumes the form of a ſorrowful, at others of a ſhameful feeling. The latter happens when the judgment we reprobate ſeems to indicate

indicate a weakneſs of underſtanding, and when we remember, that we fancied our choice the reſult of prudent and cautious deliberation. The ſentiment we feel is afflictive, when the determination we repent of appears unfriendly, unkind, or ungrateful to thoſe who wiſh us well. Repentance riſes to remorſe, when our maturer judgment diſcovers in our former reſolve any great and irreparable injury to others, and reprobates it for this reaſon. It becomes ſelf-condemnation, when we perceive near and inevitable a threatened puniſhment, which we before knew, but which at the moment of our unhappy determination was overlooked and unheeded. Finally, it is deſpair, when our whole happineſs appears to be irrevocably deſtroyed by the action of which we repent.

I cannot quit the ſubject without endeavouring to remove a plauſible objection, to which the preceding explanation of repentance ſeems to be expoſed. It may be ſaid, if the ſentiment of free-will ariſe from the alternation of two different and oppoſite ſtates of the mind, repentance, depending on the ſame, would be no better founded. The diſſatisfaction, accompanying it would alſo ariſe from a ſelf-deception, and muſt conſequently vaniſh as ſoon as we diſcover, that when we embraced the reſolve of which we repent we were otherwiſe determined by the ſtate of our mind at that time, than we are by the preſent. It appears too, that an adherent to the ſyſtem of neceſſity, if he remain true to his creed, muſt ſet himſelf above repentance, and be able to philoſophize away at will every painful ſenſation accompanying it. This objection takes for granted, that we can approve or diſapprove, or feel ſatisfaction or diſſatisfaction, at nothing, whether done by ourſelves or others, unleſs what might have remained undone in exactly the ſame circumſtances. If this were true, it would be ſelf-evident, that neither ſelf-approbation nor diſapprobation, a good conſcience nor repentance,

would be compatible with the ſyſtem of neceſſity. But this is merely a *gratis dictum.* Experience, and the ſlighteſt attention to ourſelves, teach us, in the firſt place, that every thing which is beneficial, or which excites pleaſing ſenſations, is agreeable to us, and that every thing injurious, or which excites unpleaſing ſenſations, is diſagreeable to us; and this, indeed, of themſelves, without the conception or conſciouſneſs of an abſolute free agency being neceſſarily required, to make the one agreeable, and the other diſagreeable. Whence it happens, that the profitableneſs or injurioufneſs of the actions of intelligent beings pleaſe or diſpleaſe us in a particular manner, I ſhall hereafter have occaſion to explain. Beſides, every contradiction is of itſelf repugnant and unpleaſant to us. Thus when I am convinced, that he who contradicts my opinion, or blames my conduct, ſees the caſe on an oppoſite ſide, to that on which I view it, ſtill his contradiction or blame give me pain, and indeed the more in proportion as I eſteem his approbation and value him more highly. If his approval be indiſpenſable to my ſatisfaction, and it be not poſſible for me to bring him over to my way of thinking, in order to obtain it, and avoid the pain ariſing from his oppoſition, I ſhall alter my conduct conformably to his judgment. Suppoſe a man unable to ſolve a certain propoſition by a given time, notwithſtanding he ſpares no labour or exertion, and thus fail of obtaining a prize offered for its ſolution, yet, when it is too late, diſcover that on which he before beſtowed ſo much trouble in vain. Though he cannot impute to himſelf the leaſt blame for the tardineſs of his diſcovery, would he not be diſſatisfied with himſelf, or at leaſt wiſh that he had made his diſcovery earlier? Now this wiſh really includes the pain of repentance, and is not eſſentially different from that which follows a bad or imprudent action, though with reſpect to degree, and on account of concomitant

concomitant circumſtances, they are indeed diſtinguiſhable. After an inconſiderate, precipitate, and unſucceſsful action, though we may feel nothing of what is termed guilt, ſtill we fail not to wiſh, that we had before poſſeſſed the juſt notions that we now have, and had left the action unattempted. We muſt actually become indifferent to our perfection or imperfection, happineſs or unhappineſs, when the ſubſequent diſcovery of an unwiſe, raſh, or injurious reſolve, however impoſſible it may have been for us to have avoided it, does not excite in us diſſatisfaction. The moſt ſubtile reaſoning would be as little able to exempt us from this diſſatisfaction, as from the ſenſe of our littleneſs and imperfection.

To ſet this in a clearer light, I will add a few remarks. Firſt, he who would ſuppreſs repentance from the principle, that man acts from neceſſity, muſt alſo admit, that his actions make him neither more imperfect nor more unhappy, and draw after them neither natural nor poſitive puniſhments. He muſt alſo, indeed, in order to efface the diſſatisfaction of repentance, but half admit the ſyſtem of neceſſity; ſo far only as it does away our guilt; rejecting it ſo far as it renders our ſufferings neceſſary. As ſoon as we learn by inconteſtable experience, that all our actions, notwithſtanding the neceſſity by which they are impelled, are profitable or injurious to ourſelves and others, the pleaſure of ſatisfaction on the diſcovery of their utility, and the pain of diſſatisfaction, or repentance, at perceiving their hurtfulneſs, cannot but enſue. Even poſitive puniſhments, ſince they are nothing more than ſalutary medicaments, or neceſſary means of inſtruction, are neither unjuſt nor uſeleſs, but are rather good, as they are neceſſary.

Secondly; To feel that repentance which is not only conſiſtent with, but even requiſite to the ſyſtem of neceſſity, when completely conſidered, a man muſt know, that injuſtice and ſin are injuſtice and ſin

by reaſon that they are in general detrimental, or the natural cauſe of miſery, and that they are forbidden to us under the denunciation of puniſhment, to reſtrain us from an evil more great than that puniſhment, and which would neceſſarily follow thoſe actions that are forbidden. If a man be convinced of this, he will perceive as little injuſtice in the evils conſequent to thoſe bad actions, as in a chirurgical operation, which, however painful, is neceſſary to preſerve life. If a man have brought it upon himſelf by a voluntary determination, he will repent the raſh ſtep which rendered the remedy neceſſary, or wiſh that he had not done it, and ſteadfaſtly reſolve never to act in the ſame manner if he ſhould be in ſimilar circumſtances. This repentance will take place, whether we be conſcious or not, that under our former circumſtances we were neceſſarily impelled to perceive and think as we then did. The painful ſenſation we feel forces the wiſh not to have committed the raſh deed, or not to have been determined to it; and as little as the moſt ſubtile reaſoning can avail to annihilate the former, as little can it to ſuppreſs the wiſh which may be termed the ſecond part of repentance. But the better reſolution is ſo far from being excluded or rendered abſurd by the ſyſtem of neceſſity, as rather to be from it alone rational and ſalutary; ſince, on the preſumption of chance, that is, the ſuppoſition of the free-will of indifferency, neither of the two would take place. The more ſteadfaſtly I reſolve never to make a determination which I diſcover to be pernicious, in a future ſimilar ſituation, the leſs can exactly ſimilar circumſtances hereafter recur to me: for though my future ſituation may be in every other reſpect ſimilar, ſtill the traces of the repentance I felt, and the better reſolution I formed, remaining in my mind, will occaſion ſo notable a difference, that I may dare to hope never again to be determined to a ſimilar folly

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in the hour of trial. I have ſtyled the reſolution of amendment the ſecond part of repentance: with reſpect to its utility it might alſo be termed the moſt noble and important. Though from the preſuppoſed neceſſity of human actions, it might be doubted, whether it be reaſonable or not, to be diſſatisfied with the performance of bad actions, ſtill it is without diſpute moſt highly reaſonable, ſo far to diſapprove of paſt evil deeds, as ſteadfaſtly to reſolve to amend our conduct, ſince, even on the ſyſtem of neceſſity, this ſentiment of diſapprobation, and the reſolution inſeparable from it, muſt have a ſalutary influence on our future behaviour, or tend to produce a ſtate of mind different from that which determined us to go aſtray. From this mode of viewing the ſubject, it appears, that the diſſatisfaction eſſential to repentance is only valuable ſo far as it conduces to confirm our reſolutions of amendment, and engrave them more deeply on the mind. Now ſince the diſſatisfaction of repentance is requiſite to this good purpoſe, he who ſees the truth completely, and comprehends the ſyſtem of neceſſity in its whole extent, far from ſuppreſſing the pain of repentance, even were it in his power ſo to do, would endeavour to maintain it in its full force. He would apply it, however, wholly to the advantage of the future. To confine himſelf to the painful ſenſation of lamenting his miſconduct, without caſting an eye forwards to the future, and to continue without ceaſing in fruitleſs ſorrow for what is paſt, would be as little conſonant to his ſyſtem as to reaſon.

Thirdly; Repentance is two-fold. There is an enlightened, rational repentance, ariſing from the knowledge that we have miſtaken and neglected our real advantage. To creatures ſo weak as men it is a ſpur to make them advance with more ſpeed in the road to perfection, and at the ſame time a bridle to prevent their going aſtray. The pain con-

nected with this repentance punishes our follies only so far as is necessary to cure us of them, afflicts us only that we may rejoice, and depresses only to exalt us. Of a similar nature with that godly sorrow, which, as St. Paul observes, brings forth a repentance meet for salvation, and which no one can rue, this pain can never be deemed unfounded, useless, or prejudicial, but approves itself necessary and advantageous on the strictest examination of every true system of philosophy, founded on experience and observation, not on the chimeras of inventive fancy. This repentance is not only consistent with the scheme of necessity, but derives all its value from it. There is, however, a blind repentance, produced by an obscure sentiment of an arbitrary and wholly unconditional free-will, and supported by erroneous conceptions of merited vegeance. It occupies itself altogether with what has happened, and should not have happened. It takes vengeance in a proper sense in vain, and punishes the offender merely to give him pain. It terminates in moral stupefaction and despair, and like that physical melancholy which arises from the irretrievable loss of some apparent good, ultimately produces death. This repentance is by no means defensible on the system of necessity. But were this species of it, with the punishment it inflicts, totally rejected as absurd, irrational, and useless, neither virtue nor humanity would, in my opinion, be losers by it.

It appears, that the system of necessity explains both the sentiment of free-will, and that of repentance, and indeed in such a manner, that the explanation serves to confirm the system itself: but on the opposite system of chance, we cannot comprehend whence repentance arises, or what end it answers. We comprehend not whence it arises, since the sole ground of repentance of an action according to this system, namely its falling out unfortunately, is not the

the true and proper ground of that ſentiment: for we frequently find very unpleaſant conſequences follow an action which we cannot repent of, but muſt approve. This is the caſe, when, having acted conformably to all the knowledge we had of the object of our choice, and with the greateſt circumſpection, we, on a ſubſequent examination of this action, paſs the ſame judgment as before, and muſt aſcribe the unforeſeen misfortune which enſues to ſome circumſtances concealed from us, and which could have no influence on our determination. Neither do the ill conſequences of our determination lead us to repentance, when we have clearly foreſeen them, yet nevertheleſs eſteem the performance of the action the greater good. So is it with ſelf-approbation after any action. This is not properly founded on its happy conſequences, but on the circumſtance, that on a ſubſequent inveſtigation of our motives we would determine in the very ſame manner as we had before done. Thus as the circumſtance, that what we have choſen turns out lucky or unlucky, does not conſtitute the eſſential and principal point of ſelf-approbation, or repentance, though both theſe ſentiments are capable of being heightened and differently modified thereby, they who defend the freedom of indifferency muſt ſuppoſe ſome other connection and relation of approbation and repentance with the action that is approved or repented of, if the action be really connected with the repentance or approbation that enſue. In this caſe there muſt be ſome circumſtance in the action itſelf which cauſes approbation or repentance. If, however, a man have choſen from chance, or a blind arbitrary determination, there is no circumſtance diſcoverable in ſuch a choice on which repentance can be founded, unleſs perhaps, that he ſhould not have choſen from chance, or ſuch a blind volition. But as this very circumſtance, according to the ideas of our philoſophers, conſtitutes the eſſence of free

free-will, and if no free choice can any other way be exerciſed, it is impoſſible, that this can be the ſource of repentance, as in that caſe every free choice muſt be repented of. We muſt alſo farther ſuppoſe, that, as the free choice or determination is made without a ſufficient cauſe, the approbation or repentance of this determination is equally a free action of the mind, which, like the choice on which it is founded, is produced without a ſufficient cauſe, that is by chance or a blind volition. In this caſe it is juſt as incomprehenſible why a man has formed a certain reſolution, as why he approves or repents of his reſolve. Unable as the ſyſtem of free-will is to explain the occaſional cauſe of approbation or repentance, equally incapable is it of explaining the final cauſes of thoſe ſentiments. If an action be really connected with the repentance or approbation felt after it, and the one be capable of being explained from the other, the ſtate of the mind after the choice from the ſtate of the mind during the choice, as an effect from its cauſe, or as a thing grounded on ſomething from that on which it is grounded, according to certain pſychological laws, then the ſubſequent ſtate of the mind will be connected with its future ſtate, when it has to chooſe again, and be ſo dependent on it, that its preſent ſenſation of approval or repentance muſt have a neceſſary and profitable influence on its future determinations. This is the final cauſe or utility of thoſe ſenſations on the ſcheme of neceſſity. But the freedom of indifferency deſtroys this latter connection, or that of repentance or approbation with our future reſolves, and conſequently this final cauſe or advantage of them, completely, or at leaſt in the degree in which a man poſſeſſes and exerciſes this freedom. Every thing that happens as a conſequence of them is unfounded, fruitleſs, and totally incomprehenſible.

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Some philoſophers, to avoid theſe conſequences of the freedom of indifferency, which they have acknowledged to be a preference to act irrationally, and at the ſame time not daring to admit the freedom of neceſſity, againſt which they were ſo prejudiced, have endeavoured to find a middle point between the two, or a freedom neither completely determinate nor indeterminate. According to their notion, man's freedom conſiſts in the faculty of ſuſpending choice, and, by propoſing an over-balancing good, of remaining undetermined, reflecting on the caſe, and weighing its advantages and diſadvantages againſt each other ſtill farther; a faculty which is properly an original power of his own, as it requires no external cauſe for its uſe or diſuſe. It is eaſy to be ſhewn, however, that this is no other in fact than the rejected freedom of indifferency, only ſomewhat otherwiſe expreſſed. According to this middle kind of freedom, man poſſeſſes a faculty of reſiſting his ſtrongeſt motives, and equally poſſeſſes it not; he has it only for a time. Under the very ſame circumſtances choice is protracted, or expedited. But why is the choice finally determined? why not procraſtinated ſtill longer? and why is not a man undecided to all eternity? If it be ſaid, the motives, and their adequacy to his underſtanding, make him ultimately determine, we fall into the ſyſtem of neceſſity: for this is what the partiſans of that ſyſtem maintain. But this is not the meaning. Rather all the circumſtances are completely the ſame whilſt the choice is protracted, and when it is concluded. No alteration has taken place, either in the motives, or in their adequacy to the underſtanding: no new motives have been added to make the former more clear, lively, or perſpicuous to the mind. Otherwiſe theſe alterations would be the occaſional cauſes of determining the protracted choice. Thus nothing elſe remains, and the concluſion of the choice muſt depend

depend on an original power, the uſe or neglect of which is founded on nothing elſe, and is conſequently altogether incomprehenſible. The two oppoſite things, my now determining, or leaving myſelf more time for reflection, my being precipitate, or conſidering maturely, have no grounds, and thus happen from chance or a blind arbitrary will, according to the ideas we have of thoſe words, exactly in the ſame manner as, according to the dreams of Epicurus, regular bodies and a world ſprung from the fortuitous concourſe and union of atoms. This alſo occurs in and characterizes the freedom of indifferency. But it is evident, that, in whatever this chance or blind will be placed, it amounts to the ſame thing in effect, whether it be ſaid, that a man can by means of his free-will reſiſt his ſtrongeſt motives, at the moment when they are to him the ſtrongeſt, or that he can protract or accelerate his choice without any cauſe, that is, whilſt the whole iſſue and conſequence of the choice depends on this, that he can fortify what motives he chooſes, and make them his proper incentives to action, according to a blind arbitrary will.

From this view of the caſe it is clear with how much reaſon Hartley conſiders it a mere *gratis dictum* to ſay, that the freedom of indifferency is ſo eſſential to man, that God, in creating him, muſt have made it innate to him. If it be eſſential to man, an intelligent creature capable of happineſs without it is inconceivable. But who would aſſert this? Who cannot at leaſt have a clear conception of an intelligent creature, whoſe will is always determined by a ſufficient cauſe, and according to certain immutable laws? What is there in this contradictory to the happineſs of an intelligent being, and to reaſon, that is, to the faculty of having clear ideas of the qualities and habitudes of things, and acting from thoſe clear ideas? Nay more, ſince all the phænomena of the human

human mind may be comprehenſibly explained on the ſcheme of ſuch a mechaniſm, it is impoſſible, that the reverſe of it can be eſſential to man. To this we may add, that this freedom, termed eſſential to man, is incomprehenſible, introduces ſomewhat into man's nature, to which there is nothing in any other part of nature ſimilar or analogous, and in effect, let a man turn it what way he will, eſtabliſhes the doctrine of chance. But what if with this mechaniſm man become nothing more than a machine, or at moſt an intelligent machine? What if this deſtroy all diſtinction betwixt moral good and evil, or indeed all morality? And what if it render God the author of evil? Theſe are the fearful objections uſually brought againſt mechaniſm; but were they well founded, they would by no means prove, that the freedom of indifferency is eſſential to man.

The mind, it is ſaid, would be a machine, were its actions neceſſary. This is an *argumentum ad invidiam* as it is called. It tends not to refute neceſſity, but to render it odious. Nothing in the human mind is altered thereby. It retains its eſſential excellencies, the faculty of thinking rationally, of acting, and of being happy. Whether it be termed a machine or not, whilſt it retains thoſe excellencies, is a matter of indifference. Leibnitz heſitates not to ſtyle it *automa ſpirituale*, and if his ſcholars have avoided uſing the odious appellation of a machine, it was that they might not incur the evil report of the unlearned, or be treated as heretics by ignorant judges. They could not venture freely to avow it, whilſt it was believed, that mechaniſm would deſtroy all imputation of moral good or evil to men's actions, and partly too, they had not ſufficiently clear ideas of the matter, to be capable of ſhewing how little foundation there was for this belief. What has ſince been ſaid by others, however, in explanation and juſtification of the ſyſtem of neceſſity, and

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eſpecially by our author, will perfectly exculpate the partiſans of that ſyſtem from the odious conſequences laid to its charge.

Hartley's inquiries into this propoſition throw great light on it. Nothing conduces more to clear up the erroneous controverſies which have been ſtarted on free-will, than the juſt remark, that the diſputants have uſed a double language, one philoſophical, the other popular; and that all the perplexities that have ariſen on the ſubject ſprung from confounding theſe two languages. I have nothing to add to this, except a few words in explanation of that important propoſition: *that moral good and evil are nothing but modifications or appearances of natural good and evil.* It is difficult not to be of this opinion, as ſoon as we place the eſſence and characteriſtic of moral good and evil in this, that the former is the ground of ſatisfaction, order and happineſs, and the latter, of diſſatisfaction, diſorder and miſery, that is, of natural good and evil. But can the eſſence of moral good and evil be otherwiſe defined in an intelligible and comprehenſible manner? Does any thing elſe, commonly given as a diſtinction of good and evil, go ſo far to eſtabliſh the proper beauty of virtue, the hatefulneſs of vice, and the limits between the two, in ſo clear and preciſe a manner, as the tendency of the one to miſery, and the other to happineſs? Is not every other characteriſtic of moral good and evil capable, in effect, of being traced up to, and explained by this eſſential diſtinction? And, finally, what can be oppoſed to the ſophiſms of thoſe who would deny the diſtinction betwixt virtue and vice of more weight than this, that they muſt equally deny the diſtinction betwixt content and diſcontent, happineſs and miſery? If it be admitted, that the actions of man are only good or bad as far as they are the grounds of natural good and evil, it is eaſy to ſhew, that what is properly real in and eſſential

eſſential to theſe actions is in effect natural good or evil, which they include, and to which they tend. But as the actions of men tend to and promote theſe in manifold ways, and, as our author obſerves, compound and modify them in various manners, the reſult of this modification is an appearance to thoſe who know not to diſtinguiſh what is properly the ground of this reſult, and whence it ariſes. And this muſt be an appearance to them, whilſt they have not the tendency of the action they judge of conſtantly in ſight, inſpect not its whole connection, and decide not from theſe, but from their own narrow ſphere of view; juſt as colour is to us an appearance, whilſt we cannot diſtinguiſh the primitive component parts of bodies from which that appearance ariſes. As little as our perceptions of colour reſemble thoſe of a ſuperior being endowed with leſs circumſcribed faculties, as little would moral good and evil appear the ſame to ſuch a being, or at leaſt to the Supreme Being, who ſees every thing clearly, as to us. He would diſcover in men's actions nothing farther than their tendency to natural good and evil, without commixture of thoſe ſecondary ideas of moral uglineſs and beauty, which, founded on our narrow faculty of conception, is to us relatively good and uſeful, but neither to a being that penetrates the eſſence of things.

To this view of the queſtion it might be objected that the moral characteriſtics of actions, the praiſe and approbation which we beſtow on ſome, and the blame and abhorrence which we expreſs to others, thus loſe their proper ſignification, force, and value; and likewiſe, that the moral ſenſations of the beauty and fitneſs of virtue, and the uglineſs and hatefulneſs of vice, are by this hypotheſis rendered inſignificant and inefficacious. Farther, a ſolution of the following difficulty might be required. Why are our moral diſtinctions and perceptions of good and evil founded only

only on that phyſical good or evil which is occaſioned and modified by the voluntary actions of men, or rather on thoſe actions alone, and not on any other kind of phyſical good or evil? Why feel we not the ſame ſenſations of abhorrence and indignation when a man is killed by the falling of a tree, as when his death is occaſioned by a blow from an enemy? The phyſical evil is in both caſes equal: if this alone then be the real ground of our feelings, it is not conceivable whence the great difference betwixt our ſenſations and judgment in the two caſes can ariſe. It would be eaſy for me to extricate myſelf from this dilemma, were I, with a certain Engliſh philoſopher to have recourſe to final cauſes. I need only ſay, in the one caſe theſe feelings are neceſſary and uſeful, in the other not. But this is not removing the difficulty; it ſerves at moſt to ſhew, that it muſt be ſo. Neither does it ſatisfy me, to aſcribe the origin of the moral ſenſe, ſo far as it ariſes from ſomething elſe than the natural good or evil which an action tends to or includes, to laws, education, or inſtruction. For not to mention, that all theſe diſpoſitions can introduce no perceptions into the human mind, but what are founded on its frame and confined faculties, the difficulty is only put off a ſtep farther, and we muſt ſtill inquire, how did the human underſtanding firſt arrive at theſe moral diſtinctions? This queſtion demands an anſwer: and if a clear anſwer can be given, not only compatible with the propoſition, but deducible from it, a new proof of its validity ariſes from the very objection.

I will endeavour to explain the ſubject from the nature of appearances. This, indeed, cannot be done without ſome ſeeming ſubtilties, whence I can ſcarce hope, that the inveſtigation will ſuit the taſte of all my readers. I cannot, however, but deem it neceſſary, as it may lead us to ſuch important conſequences.

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The more various the parts of which any ſubject of our obſervation is compoſed, and the leſs able we are to perceive thoſe parts ſeparately, or diſtinguiſh which and how many of them contribute to the reſult of the whole, the leſs will our obſervation diſcloſe to us the actual ſtate of that whole, as it conſiſts of its ſeveral parts, and through each of them effects a particular action on us, or the leſs objective truth will there be in our perceptions. As every thing we perceive, every thing rendered by perception an object of thought, is compounded, and includes a multifariouſneſs of which the ſenſes can diſtinguiſh little or nothing, it is highly probable, that we perceive nothing, and, whilſt we confine ourſelves to mere perceptions, think of nothing, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, actually as it is: but that we muſt content ourſelves with the appearances of things, which are wide of or approach the truth, according as our minds more or leſs minutely comprehend the multiplied diverſity of their compoſition at one view. Hence it follows, that a particular object, when united in our conceptions with one or more adventitious circumſtances, and thus compounded becomes to us another more or leſs accurate appearance, that is, in one way or other, more or leſs departing from the objective truth. The more ingredients a made diſh or medicine is compoſed of, the more difficult is it for us to aſcertain the particular effect of each component part, and the more different the taſte of the whole compoſition to the palate from that of its parts taken ſeparately. A few colours mixed together give an appearance different from that of all the primitive colours united in one view. So is it with natural beauty and uglineſs. No one will eaſily doubt, that the former is merely an appearance, or the reſult of certain parts, their diſpoſition, relation, and proportion, ariſing from their being all taken in at one view in a certain manner. If in viewing characters and

actions we form perceptions ſimilar to thoſe ideas, and founded in like manner on the diſpoſition, relation, and proportion of their various conſtituent parts, we apply the terms of beauty and uglineſs to actions and characters. Let that conſtitution, which, whether clearly or obſcurely perceived, is capable of exciting in both caſes the idea of beauty, be termed perfection, or what elſe you pleaſe, ſtill the original foundation of its agreeableneſs is a ſuppoſed or imagined utility of the object, as a ſuppoſed or imagined noxiouſneſs is the foundation of an object's being diſagreeable. Thus, generally taken, natural and moral beauty and uglineſs are nothing but a confuſedly and obſcurely perceived utility or noxiouſneſs. But why do we diſtinguiſh the beautiful from the uſeful, and the ugly from the noxious? Unqueſtionably becauſe both the uſeful and noxious are ſometimes ſo compounded, and ſo concealed under the manifold diverſity of the object, that it is not eaſy to diſcover, diſtinguiſh, and aſcertain the relation of either to its ground of utility or noxiouſneſs, on our complicated view of it: in other words, becauſe beauty and uglineſs are appearances compounded of more parts, and differently modified from mere noxiouſneſs or utility. Theſe latter qualities in their greateſt purity muſt be as little mixed and compounded as poſſible, and are thus obviouſly diſcoverable, when conſidered merely as noxious or uſeful. That beauty and uglineſs, however, are nothing but compound appearances of the uſeful and noxious, may be ſhewn from the following conſiderations.

In the firſt place: beauty and utility, uglineſs and noxiouſneſs, range themſelves under two general heads; the former under the general idea of agreeable or commendable, the latter under the idea of diſagreeable or blame-worthy. If theſe general ideas be liable to various modifications or alterations, ſtill what

what is eſſential to them remains, and their alterations conſiſt only in their exact relation to the modifications and compoſitions of their different ſubjects, the noxious and the uſeful. Unqueſtionably, elegance, gracefulneſs, and majeſty on the one hand, and inelegance, brutality, and meanneſs on the other, may be conſidered as branches or diviſions of beauty and uglineſs. The different perceptions and ideas excited in us by the juſt-mentioned ſpecies of uglineſs and beauty ariſe from the different and manifold compoſition of thoſe ſpecies as they ſtrike our eyes. So is it with the uſeful and the beautiful, with the noxious and the ugly. Utility aſſumes the form of beauty, and noxiouſneſs of uglineſs, as beauty becomes to us elegance when aſſociated with a proportional ſmallneſs, majeſty when united with a certain degree of greatneſs, &c. or as the ſimultaneous impreſſion is differently compounded, and aſſociated with collateral circumſtances. Secondly; If we examine the appearance of beauty and uglineſs, ſeparating thoſe parts, the united or rather compound effect of which excites in us the perception of uglineſs and beauty, and diſtinguiſhing them as far as poſſible from each other, our proceſs will at laſt bring us to a diſcovery of utility, fitneſs, or conduciveneſs to ſome end. If we change our poſition with reſpect to the object of our perceptions, our view will not be ſo variouſly complicated, or two or more parts of it will repreſent to us a different whole. In this caſe, either the illuſion will wholly vaniſh, and with it the perception of beauty or uglineſs, whilſt we ſee the naked truth, or the bare utility or noxiouſneſs of the object; or its beauty will adorn itſelf with the new charms of elegance, gracefulneſs, or majeſty, and its uglineſs will appear under the diſguſting ſhape of inelegance, brutality or meanneſs. Had a fly the moſt refined taſte that man ever poſſeſſed, it muſt be inſenſible to the beauty of St. Peter's, as its limited ſight would

want that range neceſſary at one view to take in the whole, whence its effect is produced. Gulliver was blind to the charms of the lovely Brobdignagian, becauſe he was ſo near to the individual parts and traits of the gigantic fair, that his microſcopic eye had time and opportunity to examine the ingredients of her beauty one by one, whilſt he was unable to ſurvey and contemplate the whole at once. He was in the caſe of thoſe who look cloſely at a freſco painting. On the other hand, however, an object may be too ſmall to excite in us perceptions of beauty or uglineſs. Its conſtituent parts may appear to us too confuſed to admit of diſtinction, and be inſuſceptible of any compoſition in our eyes. If, however, we approach nearer to ſuch an object, or it be magnified to us by the help of art, it may appear to us beautiful or ugly.

As to moral perceptions, the appearances on which they are founded are ſuſceptible of a great and variable multifariouſneſs. Phyſical good and evil, or utility and noxiouſneſs, are the real grounds of theſe appearances, and the not developed but compounded obſervation of their particular nature, magnitude, importance, and duration, is the perception which anſwers to the appearance. Were there ſuch inſignificant characters, ſuch impotent and fruitleſs actions, as to afford the obſerver no mediate or immediate proſpect of utility or detriment, they would be by no means an object of moral perception. As ſoon, however, as we diſcover in an action any intention of the agent, it awakens our moral feelings. But this intention relates to ſome natural good or evil, without which it is not to be conceived. The intelligent obſerver cannot ſeparate this intention from the diſpoſition and frame of the mind that cheriſhes and acts according to it. It is to him a ſketch of the whole character, a manifeſtation of all the good and evil variouſly combined in it. How complex, how variouſly

variouſly compounded ſhall we find the idea of him who examines an intentional action, if that idea be traced back to its origin! To an obſerver, then, who can form a conception of intention, muſt not the ſame action, when performed intentionally, have a very different appearance, and conſequently excite very different ſenſations, from what it does when happening by chance? Muſt we not feel very differently for the death of a man killed by an enemy, and for that of one cruſhed by a falling tree? Still more different muſt the appearances and ſenſations in the two caſes be, if in the former we combine into one view with the action itſelf, and the intention, the idea of its conſequences, or the good and evil which it produces and may occaſion. In the latter caſe, indeed, the conſequences of the action will alſo be brought into conſideration, but they will not be by far ſo complicated, important, or durable, as thoſe in the former, or intentional action. It would carry me much too far, were I circumſtantially to ſhew, how the appearance of an intentional act is in effect, with reſpect to its conſequences very differently compounded and modified from that of a fortuitous occurrence. In the latter, permit me juſt to obſerve, the cauſe of the evil is tranſient, and leads us not to fear eaſily another of the like kind: whilſt alſo what is extrinſic to the cauſe itſelf comes not into contemplation, and makes no part of the appearance. In the former, our perceptions extend to the agent, his future fate, and the influence of the action upon him. In both caſes our moral ſurvey includes, with the ſufferer, all thoſe who take a part in his fate, as relations, friends, or enemies. But in the caſe of premeditated murder we embraced all thoſe who as members of the community have a ſimilar fate to apprehend, and even in an eſpecial manner ourſelves, intermingling with

our ideas ſuch a care and reſpect to the future, as cannot take place in an accidental occurrence.

In my opinion, what I have here advanced, concerning the nature of appearances, and the affinity between phyſical and moral beauty, may ſuffice to remove the objection raiſed againſt our hypotheſis from the difference of the ſenſations excited by phyſical and moral evil. I perceive, however, that the perceptions or ideas of juſtice and injuſtice require to be ſtill farther developed. Which of the two I ought to ſtyle them I am in doubt; as they ſeem to me to occupy a middle place between perceptions and ideas. On the one hand, they are not ſufficiently clear and explicit to merit the appellation of ideas: on the other, they ſeem to me to have too much clearneſs and preciſion to be deemed merely perceptions. They are not produced in us by means of an indiſcriminate compound view, as are thoſe of beauty and uglineſs, and ſo far ought not to be ſtyled perceptions. We always acquire our notions of juſtice and injuſtice by comparing an intention or action with ſome rule, and diſcovering its agreement with or contrariety to it. As far as compariſon itſelf, and the conception of a concordant or diſcordant proportion, are works of the underſtanding, they ſeem to belong to the claſs of intellectual ideas. But as by the help of the rule (which is a general propoſition, that expreſſes how the conduct muſt be regulated to attain a certain good, or to avoid a certain evil) the underſtanding is relieved from a great part of the labour of inquiry, ſo that it needs not carry on its proſpect of the future, and calculation or weighing of the good and bad conſequences of an action ſo far as to the diſcovery of its noxiouſneſs or utility, the words juſt or unjuſt never clearly point out to us the phyſical good to be attained, or evil to be avoided, but the former ſignifies only a conformity to the rule, and the latter a non-

non-conformity to it: ſo far are theſe notions at leaſt half founded on an appearance, thus diſtinguiſhing themſelves from ideas of utility and noxiouſneſs, and ſtanding in the midſt, as I have obſerved, between the perceptions of moral beauty and uglineſs, and the ideas of utility and noxiouſneſs. We will endeavour to render this ſomewhat clearer. We have made ſuch rules of conduct, or they have been delivered to us, with a view of ſaving us the trouble of examining on every occaſion all the poſſible conſequences of an action. They aſſiſt our inability and negligence, which would prevent us from eſtimating with accuracy the good and evil that would follow our reſolutions. But as theſe rules ſupply the place of our own examining the good and bad conſequences of our actions, and generally, or indeed almoſt always, ſerve as a touchſtone with the deciſions of which we ſatisfy ourſelves, we are accuſtomed to conſider them as ſomething original, which admits not of being traced to a higher ſource; juſt as we do in criticiſm with the rules and examples of great maſters; and our approbation, or diſapprobation of an action, are juſt as much excited by them, as if we took in all the conſequences of that action at one view, or had an immediate proſpect of the good and evil it included. No wonder, then, that this is ſomewhat different from moral perception. The appearance is leſs multifarious. Inſtead of the diverſely multiplied and diſtant conſequences, which we muſt contemplate or revolve in our thoughts, if we would eſtimate an action, not according to ſome rule, but from calculation of the obſcurely perceived or clearly diſcovered good and evil included in it, we conſider merely the rule, with the reſpect it has acquired from its author, long cuſtom, the conſent of mankind, and its true or ſuppoſed indiſpenſability, taking into the account the determinate good it promiſes thoſe who are

obedient to it, and the determinate evil with which it threatens the diſobedient. The rule itſelf is more determinate, and the caſes that occur are more preciſely eſtimated by it, in proportion as the good or evil is more clearly perceived. Its rewards and puniſhments are more concentrated, more intelligibly propoſed, and eſpecially more certain and inevitable, than the good or evil which might enſue from the action itſelf. From the latter circumſtance ariſe the ideas of guilt and innocence; when, namely, the evil conſequent to an action is, by means of a rule, held out to us as near and inevitable, ſo that we cannot think on the action without its conſequences, and know and foreſee, previous to the action, that they muſt affect us from our own choice and determination, we pronounce ourſelves not free from theſe conſequences, that is, we find ourſelves guilty. Let the ſlighteſt circumſtance be changed, the perception is weakened or annihilated. If the evil following an action be not an inevitable conſequence of it, or not near enough to be aſcribed to it, or if the agent have not previouſly known it to be a conſequence of his action, he would conſider himſelf in the firſt inſtance leſs guilty, in the laſt wholly innocent.

To confirm the hypotheſis here delivered I will mention ſome facts well known by experience. Firſt; The more a man has exerted himſelf to inveſtigate the particular component parts of moral perceptions, that is, the natural good and evil compriſed therein, the different nature, relation, and importance of theſe, &c. the more will he be ſuſceptible of nice and juſt perceptions of morality. Theſe perceptions will be ſtrengthened and rendered more luminous, as the various parts which conſtitute the whole will have a more powerful effect, than when ſuperficially viewed or unnoticed. Thus a beautiful ſymphony delights a connoiſſeur, who has ſtudied its tones, and their various relations, in a manner very different from that

that in which it affects the unlearned ear. A floriſt, capable of diſcriminating the various parts from the combined harmony of which the beauty of a flower is produced, finds far more pleaſure in contemplating this beauty than he who ſurveys it with an unſkilful eye. Thus the moral ſenſe is generally more groſs and dull in the ignorant multitude, than in the well educated and learned. In thoſe, however, who have not at leaſt ſome general though confuſed notions of utility and noxiouſneſs in actions, no moral taſte exiſts. Experience farther teaches us, that the examination of the particular component parts of beauty of any kind, if it too frequently and almoſt conſtantly employ the mind, is injurious to our feelings. The mind habituates itſelf to a neglect of the compound ſurvey of the whole, and its delight is to analyſe it, whence it falls into a way of contemplating its object microſcopically, and piece by piece. Thus many antiquarians, many philologiſts, have deſtroyed their taſte for the exquiſite beauty of works of art and genius: the ſpeculative moraliſt, who conſiders moral objects merely with the underſtanding, and for the underſtanding, and the acute caſuiſt, who diſſects and divides virtue and vice with ſo much pains and labour, render themſelves by degrees in a great meaſure incapable of a lively perception of what is beautiful or ugly, becoming or unbecoming, in character, manners, or actions. Finally, if any one had wholly deſtroyed or loſt his moral taſte, more powerful means of exciting and ſharpening his moral perceptions could not be found, than to place before his eyes unexpected, moving, boldly drawn ſcenes of the varied and extenſive happineſs of virtue, and as ſtrong portraits of the miſery of vice. As far as the moral ſenſe is capable of being whetted or reſtored, it muſt be effected by ſtrongly impreſſed notions of the good accruing from virtue, and the evil conſequent to vice, whilſt culpable inſenſibility finds in the world,

world, and in real life, what Hogarth has delineated in his moral pictures. The father in Rouſſeau's Emilius employed the ſame means to excite an abhorrence of the exceſſes of debauchery in his ſon, who was on the point of giving the reins to his wild deſires; he led him to an hoſpital, where the fearful ſcenes of pain and woe diſplayed on every hand, in the perſons of thoſe who had fallen victims to their luſts, could not but warn him from following their example.

The ſecond objection made to our hypotheſis, that it deſtroys the proper ſignification, force, and value of the moral expreſſions of praiſe and blame, or that it enfeebles or annihilates the impreſſions of moral beauty and uglineſs, may without difficulty be removed. Theſe never can be the conſequences of our inquiries. Moral relations are fixed conſtant appearances, eſtabliſhed on the nature of their objects, and of our minds. They infallibly preſent themſelves whenever we attentively conſider actions, characters or manners, and muſt unavoidably produce the perceptions which anſwer to them. Every man of underſtanding conſiders the ſymmetry of a building as a mere appearance; yet can he not reaſon away its agreeable effect on his optic nerves, or the diſagreeable one of its oppoſite. To Newton's eye, returning from the contemplation of his priſm, the union of the primitive colours muſt have given the appearance of whiteneſs, as well as to that of the moſt ignorant peaſant.

The author of our nature had unqueſtionably wiſe views, when he ſo formed our minds, that good and evil proceeding from an intelligent being ſhould have different appearances to man, and excite different perceptions in him, from what they do when occaſioned by an unintelligent cauſe. If we would have juſt notions of theſe final cauſes, let us compare the moral marks of character and actions, ſo far as they

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are conſidered as beautiful or ugly, ſeemly or unſeemly, virtuous or wicked, with the impreſſion by which the certain worth of a piece of money is aſcertained, when the ſovereign or ſtate intend not to affix thereby any nominal value above the intrinſic worth of the coin, but merely to determine the real value of the metal. If we had a ſenſe juſt and delicate enough to enable us with certainty and readineſs to diſtinguiſh the exact fineneſs, weight, and value of any piece of gold or ſilver offered us, the impreſſion would be ſuperfluous and unneceſſary: but as we want this juſt, delicate, and ready power of diſtinguiſhing, the impreſſion on a coin muſt teach us its true worth, and this not only ſaves us the trouble of weighing and aſſaying it, but alſo ſecures us from error and deception. In like manner, the moral characters, the tokens of praiſe or blame, which our perceptions impreſs on actions, tempers, or manners, would be unneceſſary and ſuperfluous, if we poſſeſſed ſuch a clear, juſt, and ready penetration of the natural good and evil to be found in moral objects, or ariſing from them, that we could with accuracy ſeparate them from each other, give to each its due worth and proper value, and appreciate the object as a whole, not only from its preſent internal conſtitution, but with reſpect to its relations, tendencies, and conſequences. This penetration, however, we do not poſſeſs. To ſupply its place, therefore, it is uſeful and neceſſary, that the moral ſenſe ſhould ſtamp on actions and manners a mark eaſy to be known. As reaſon cannot conveniently aſſay her objects by ſeparating them into their component parts, the ſynthetic, not analytic view, ſupplies the place of a clear knowledge, and accurate calculation. From the natural good and evil found in moral objects, it creates moral good and evil, or images of moral beauty and uglineſs. Thus, particularly with a view to ſhorten the examination, the queſtion, what is good or bad, juſt

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or unjuſt, in any particular caſe, is brought before the tribunal of perception. What we loſe in clearneſs by theſe means, is made up by the quickneſs and ſtrength of our feelings.

It is now time, a little farther to illuſtrate the application which Hartley makes of the foregoing hypotheſis. He ſhews from it the inſignificancy of the objection, that, from the ſyſtem of neceſſity, God muſt be the author of ſin. In reſpect to God, ſays he, what we call ſin is nothing but natural evil, ſo far as it is modified by, occaſioned by, and pervades the voluntary actions of men. We cannot aſcribe to the moſt perfect intelligence, which ſees nothing confuſedly, but every thing clearly and diſtinctly, the perceptions which moral appearances excite in us, ſo far at leaſt as they differ from thoſe which the view of natural evil is capable of producing. He ſees what conſtitutes the real ground of theſe appearances. Hence it follows, that the whole queſtion, whether God be the author of ſin, has no meaning, or this: does natural evil in general, and particularly that which ariſes from men's voluntary actions, enter into the deſign of God? If, however, we attribute to God our perceptions, and what this evil ſeems to us, the queſtion has no meaning. In ſinful actions God ſees the cauſe of them, the imperfection and limited faculties of the creatures, which, active or paſſive, participate them. He ſees the evil thence ariſing, previouſly conſidered ſeparately and individually. In and for itſelf this evil is not his purpoſe: but as it is connected with the whole ſcheme of his creation, and this whole ſcheme is by him approved, as in it particular evil tends to general good, and as the goodneſs and happineſs of finite creatures without this evil would be impoſſible, it muſt enter into his deſign. This deſign required the greateſt poſſible variety of creatures: in the ſcale of being, then, there muſt have been

been a place for man; and a certain degree of limitation and imperfection, to diſtinguiſh him, as well from the creatures above as from thoſe below, muſt have been eſſential to him. If the errors, faults, and imperfections of man be deducible from his eſſential and neceſſary limitation, it is not poſſible for him to be without theſe, and ſtill be man. His Creator is fully juſtified if no human being, the whole conſidered, be juſtified in deſpiſing the gift of exiſtence. He is fully juſtified, if man be from his nature capable of no happineſs, or a happineſs of a growing kind. Such a diſpoſition preſuppoſes a growing perfection, and at the beginning of man's exiſtence the loweſt degree of that perfection which is proper to him. For the ſake of brevity I may here refer to what I have ſaid in a preceding remark (p. 481.). If it be now aſked: whence ariſes the moral evil of human nature? I would anſwer: It is the conſequence of man's limited faculties, and capacity for perfection. The latter renders it neceſſary, that he ſhould be placed on the loweſt ſtep, in order that his faculties may have an opportunity of unfolding themſelves gradually: he muſt be a ſenſitive before he is a rational being. But ſhould he have a capacity for reaſon, or be an agent chooſing from his own judgment, he muſt poſſeſs a propenſity to agency as ſoon as he can act. He muſt early feel his deſtination to act after his own inclination, and on every occaſion follow this propenſity. He muſt fly, or at leaſt *will* to raiſe himſelf, before he has wings. I ſhall here employ a common remark, yet not the leſs to the purpoſe: man, whilſt a merely ſenſitive animal, exerts his agency, in the ſame manner as the ſteer, that feels himſelf deſtined to wear horns, butts with his head before his horns appear. He muſt oppoſe every thing that tends to obſtruct or circumſcribe this propenſity. Every injunction or reſtraint is an odious compulſion, againſt which

which his freedom revolts. He will not be led; he will guide himſelf. But ſince he has not yet the neceſſary knowledge, which he muſt collect from experience, he is expoſed to the illuſions of his ſenſes, and thus muſt frequently err, and chooſe evil for good. From often repeated error he will acquire a readineſs of going aſtray, which tardy reaſon will find difficult to deſtroy; and propenſities will ariſe, which a more juſt and perfect knowledge of things will not remove without pain and toil. Thus the moral depravity of man proceeds from the limited ſtate and conſtitution eſſential to his nature. Now as moral evil is a conſequence of metaphyſical evil, and nothing more than natural evil, the grand queſtion, whence ariſes moral evil? may be reduced to this, whence ariſes natural evil? and ultimately to this, what is the cauſe of metaphyſical evil? This queſtion of the origin of evil, ſo important to the peace of mankind, and ſo puzzling to human underſtanding, may, in my opinion, be reduced to this: when God gave exiſtence to beings out of himſelf, he muſt have made them limited, or have multiplied himſelf: if the latter be an impoſſibility, we muſt grant that his goodneſs and wiſdom might produce beings with more or fewer limitations.

PROP. XVI. p. 66.

Whether philoſophical Free-Will be conſiſtent with the Power and Knowledge of God.

Our author here ſhews in a ſolid and concluſive manner, that philoſophical free-will is inconſiſtent with the divine attributes of power and knowledge. It is not conſiſtent with God's power, ſince by it his power would be limited, and hence be no longer infinite: for as far as man exerciſed this free-will he would

would be independent of God. It may be ſaid, indeed, that he receives this free-will from God, and thus is dependent on him with reſpect to the poſſeſſion of it: but as ſoon as he puts it into action, he ceaſes to be under God's power, and withdraws himſelf from his all-embracing influence. If God have beſtowed on man ſuch a free-will, he has given him a power of freeing himſelf from his ſubjection and dependency. This ſuppoſition brings to our minds, in ſome meaſure, what the poet ſaid of Jupiter, who after he had made gold, was aſtoniſhed at the power of his own work, and confeſſed, that he had created a divinity more mighty than himſelf. As this charge may appear too ſtrong to the partiſans of philoſophical free-will, we will ſhew in another way, that this free-will places man without the ſphere of God's power and influence. We cannot poſſibly form any idea of the influence of God's power, but that it acts upon its ſubject either mediately, or immediately. Any other way is as inconceivable as power without effect or influence. If man exerciſe philoſophical free-will, God's power cannot act on him immediately, as that would be neceſſity. Neither does it act mediately, for then it would act by means of cauſes and effects, or of ſecondary cauſes. This is equally inconſiſtent with philoſophical free-will, by which the chain of cauſes is broken. As often as man exerciſes this free-will he cuts aſunder that chain by which God holds and draws all things. Either he is himſelf the creator of human actions, or chance is the lord and maſter of them, and forms a new chain which laſts till another chance breaks it, or produces nothing but iſolated links united to no others. Whatever is effected by philoſophical free-will has the original grounds of its poſſibility in the will of God, as far as chance is eſtabliſhed, and authorized to produce men's actions, by that will: but that of two poſſible and oppoſite actions one only takes place, is

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no farther aſcribable to the will of God. Whilſt God has left this to chance to determine, he has ſo far ſet limits to his own power, and left himſelf to prefer a certain action or its oppoſite, which ever blind chance, which he has placed by his ſide as a fellow-creator, wills to be produced. In ſuch an action he can no more have a determinate will, than a man in an event which he leaves to the caſt of a die. No one can in this caſe determine whether he ſhall win or loſe: and when he leaves it to chance, to decide which of the two ſhall happen, it is evident, that he himſelf determines neither of the two. So is it with God, on the ſuppoſition of philoſophical free-will. In it there is always a chance, over which he has no power and influence becauſe it is a chance. If we ſay, that he can influence the event by the production and connection of circumſtances, that can only take place by limiting or altogether removing the aſſumed chance, or ſo far as man is actually determined *ab extra* in the exerciſe of his free-will. If it be ſaid God muſt have thus limited his power when he willed the creating man a free agent; this is taking for granted, that philoſophical free-will is eſſential to man's agency, a ſuppoſition which has already been ſhewn to be unfounded. If it be ſaid farther, that man can be ſubject to no moral imputation, unleſs God have ſo limited his power; to what has before been ſaid on the ſubject we may add, that, whilſt on this ſcheme of free-will man's actions are ſubject to chance, it is not more proper to impute to him merit or demerit for his actions, than if they were ſubject to neceſſity. If the atoms of Epicurus had by their concourſe formed miſſhapen maſſes, inſtead of regular bodies, would they have been more culpable or deſerving of puniſhment, if under the guidance of chance, than if ſubject to the laws of neceſſity? (We call in this hypotheſis with more confidence, as it is in fact the ſame

ſame with the philoſophical free-will aſcribed to man, except that the latter, whilſt under the dominion of chance, admits conſciouſneſs, the former excludes it). If imputation and puniſhment be abſurd and irrational, they muſt be ſo in the higheſt degree, on the ſuppoſition of chance, as being altogether without end or uſe. Finally, if it be advanced, that God voluntarily ſet limits to his power, and thus they are not to be conſidered as derogating or detracting from his greatneſs; it muſt be for want of reflecting, that this would be ſuch a limitation of his authority, as would render it impoſſible for him to uphold and govern the world, in a great meaſure at leaſt, if not altogether. Creatures endowed with philoſophical free-will, whether they exerciſe it conſtantly or occaſionally, are wholly incapable of moral rule. The end of ſuch rule is to lead men to certain purpoſes by ſetting before them motives. When theſe motives have a certain adequacy to the underſtanding and will, and a determinate power on the mind, men are governed, or the intended purpoſes may be attained with and by them. But to this effect it is neceſſary, that they have no power of reſiſting thoſe motives which are to them the ſtrongeſt, or have no philoſophical free-will: for by the uſe of this they would at once annul the wiſeſt regulations of their ruler, remaining obſtinate and diſobedient, againſt all knowledge of their own good, and notwithſtanding his giving them every poſſible motive to obedience. This will hold good whether we ſuppoſe God or man to be the ruler of ſuch ſubjects. A human governor, it is true, is not always able to produce ſufficient motives, and frequently knows not what motives will be the ſtrongeſt and moſt powerful in certain caſes. Hence he cannot lead his ſubjects to his purpoſes ſo fully as he would, nor exerciſe a perfect dominion over them. But the all-wiſe and omnipotent God, who at the ſame time that he knows

what are the ſtrongeſt motives in every caſe, is capable of producing them, ſhould maintain the moſt perfect and unlimited authority over his rational creatures. This authority, however, would be circumſcribed, and nearly annihilated, if ungovernable man could render himſelf inſenſible to all motives, and could render vain by his free-will all the meaſures of divine power, and all the ordinances of divine wiſdom. Theſe abſurd conſequences flow from the doctrine of philoſophical free-will. Experience, however, which teaches us, that man is actually governed by man, and in a great meaſure led to the purpoſes of his ruler, and that many may be ſubjected to the will and nod of one, makes not a little againſt ſuch a free-will. If every ſubject in an extenſive kingdom, governed by an abſolute monarch, exerciſed philoſophical free-will, the whole ſum of its effects muſt be capable of being traced in an obvious and convincing manner. From the additions which each individual philoſophical free-will would give to the general will, ſuch an unbridled, fantaſtic, monſtrous chaos would ultimately ariſe, that a concordant and univerſal will, moving to any determinate end, would be an utter impoſſibility. If, however, we ſuppoſe nothing of this confuſion and diſorder in a great and wiſely regulated ſtate, but rather find, that all its members are animated with *one* mind, and moved by *one* will, there muſt be ſome means (and theſe means can be nothing but motives) capable of imparting *one* will to many men, and of infallibly attaining their end, ſince they effect it in ſo diſtinguiſhed a manner. May we not, then, carry our concluſions from the leſs to the greater? If man can ſo govern man, how much more may God rule him to the fulfilling of his will?

That the foreknowledge of God is incompatible with philoſophical free-will is clearly ſhewn by our author, and has already been ſufficiently demonſtrated by

by others. The defenders of this free-will have, indeed, already given up thus much to the arguments of their opponents, that they content themſelves with aſcribing to God a probable foreknowledge of men's actions. But Mendelſſohn, in his excellent Treatiſe on Probability, has proved in a new and incontrovertible manner, that a probable foreknowledge is abſolutely inconſiſtent with philoſophical free-will. If, ſays he, God have a probable foreknowledge with reſpect to our free actions, the degree of this probability muſt be determinate, as there cannot be a quantity without a determinate degree, if, as in this caſe, it ultimately will be. But if the degree of the divine probability be determinate, the proportion which the grounds of probability known to God bear to certainty muſt be given, as from this proportion the degree of probability is to be eſtimated. The grounds of probability are all thoſe *data* from which the truth is known, and which, if we have them all, produce certainty, if we have a greater or leſs number of them, produce a higher or lower degree of probability. Now whence does God take theſe grounds of probability? Neceſſarily from the circumſtances in which the free agent is placed, and from the motives and incentives that determine his choice. But all the circumſtances in which the agent is placed, and all his motives and incentives are inſufficient to produce a certainty of what choice he will make. Thus the degree of probability cannot be determined from the proportion which the poſitive motives bear to the poſitive and negative ones taken together: otherwiſe theſe motives muſt include ſome grounds from which this free agent is determined to one action rather than to another. Thus the more poſitive or negative motives act upon our will, the greater the probability, that we ſhall do or avoid a thing. If it were poſſible, that infinitely many motives ſhould work upon our will to the production of

a certain action, they would conſtitute an infinite degree of probability, or a certainty, as according to the opinion of theſe philoſophers the *maximum* of our free actions is only to be ſought *in infinito*. Now as in every particular caſe only a finite number of motives act upon us, the probability of the divine preſcience is to certainty, as the finite number of the motives that occaſion our choice is to an infinite number of the ſame, or the degree of the divine foreknowledge $=0$. Nothing, in my opinion, can be more juſt and clear than this demonſtration. The more am I aſtoniſhed, that Rautenberg in a remark on Hume's Eſſays on the firſt Principles of Morality and Natural Religion, tranſlated by him, ſhould diſpute this argument, or rather, admitting the premiſes, deny the concluſion. He conceives, that Mendelſſohn aſſumes, without any grounds, that all the circumſtances in which a free agent is placed do not conſtitute a certainty, which can only ariſe from an infinite number of motives: and rather believes, that from a finite number ſuch a degree of force may ariſe, as to incline the will to the one ſide, particularly when no motives, or very feeble ones only, exiſt on the other. But does not this opponent of Mendelſſohn perceive, that, according to the ſyſtem in diſpute, the circumſtances in which a free agent is placed cannot poſſibly conſtitute certainty? For did they amount to a certainty, this free agent muſt in reality be determined by circumſtances, he muſt act according to this determination and could not act otherwiſe, conſequently the freedom of indifferency, or the freedom by which man can reſiſt thoſe motives that are to him the ſtrongeſt at the time, completely falls to the ground. If he can reſiſt theſe circumſtances he is not determined by them. If he be not determined by them, there are no grounds from which his reſolution can be known. If a given number of motives certainly incline the will to one ſide, he who knows

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all theſe motives, cannot be deemed to have a probable foreknowledge, as he muſt unqueſtionably poſſeſs a certain preſcience. But this is ever and ſolely the caſe, if the will be determined by the motives actually preſent, and by nothing elſe. It is not neceſſary to add, that every ſuch caſe abſolutely excludes ſuch a freedom as enables a man to act in oppoſition to his motives, and independent of them, ſo that they are inſufficient to determine him, and their power muſt be ſupplied by ſomething elſe, not to be defined, if a determination take place. Rautenberg alſo advances, that, whilſt we are ignorant of the manner in which God knows things, we cannot infer any objection to a demonſtrated truth from his knowledge. Not to mention, that philoſophical free-will is by no means a demonſtrated truth, this is in fact ſaying nothing to the purpoſe, as Hartley very juſtly ſhews. We freely confeſs, that no argument againſt philoſophical free-will is here deduced from the nature of the divine knowledge and preſcience; but from the mere exiſtence of God's foreknowledge of men's actions, let it happen however it may, we conclude, that it is not impoſſible to foreknow thoſe actions, and conſequently, that they cannot be indeterminate and uncertain, ſince were they ſo they could not be foreknown, either by God or by any other intelligence, as what is abſolutely impoſſible, and includes a contradiction, is not more ſubject to the power of God, than to that of any other being. To be indeterminate and abſolutely uncertain in itſelf, and at the ſame time to be foreknown as certain and determinate, conſtitute as formal and palpable a contradiction as can be conceived. The one annihilates the other. Now if the infinity of God with reſpect to his other attributes cannot make any contradiction poſſible, however infinite his knowledge may be, it extends to impoſſibilities no more than does his

power. But to be uncertain and fortuitous, and yet to be foreknown as certain and neceſſary, conſtitutes a non-entity.

PROP. XIX. p. 79.

On Inſpiration.

The different opinions held concerning divine inſpiration may be conveniently reduced to three. Theſe our author mentions, with the grounds for them; but ſtill ſome other grounds may be added. There are alſo ſome general conſiderations which muſt have weight with every rational and thinking follower of the chriſtian religion, in deciding to which of the three the preference ſhould be given. This muſt firſt of all be laid down as a principle, as it indeed is by Hartley, that, which ever of the three be embraced, we pay ſuch reſpect to revelation, as to be amended, aſſured, and inſtructed in the way of ſalvation. Thus he who adopts the loweſt hypotheſis conſiders the ſcripture as his rule of faith and life, and as the ground of his hopes and expectations. But whether his opinion of divine inſpiration be in reality ſufficient to this purpoſe or not, appears to me not to be ſo properly determinable on general principles, and from a general view, as from the particular way of thinking of the party, and from the point of view from which he forms his judgment. It may ſeem to us, that no one can attain a true confidence through revelation, or a practical conviction of the truth of its doctrines, if he have not ſo high an opinion of its divine origin and authority as appears to us neceſſary for our own truſt and conviction. In this, however, we frequently err. How many pious chriſtians are ſhocked and hurt by the various readings of the ſcriptures, and the detection of

of faults that have crept into the modern text from careleſſneſs and ignorance! Unqueſtionably this ariſes from their opinion of the divine origin of the ſacred books extending itſelf to the moſt trifling circumſtances, to words, ſyllables, and letters, with which overſtretched notion the remark of ſuch errors does not accord. To ſtill more is the idea, that premeditated additions, defalcations, or corruptions of the ſcriptures have taken place, totally inadmiſſible. Now as theſe find ſuch a ſuppoſition incompatible with their high veneration for the ſcriptures, they are too prone to conclude, that all who aſſert, or even think poſſible, ſuch falſifications of particular paſſages, altogether reject the divine authority of the whole. It will probably be admitted, that in this caſe the inference from ourſelves to others is precipitate and unjuſt. But we muſt on the ſame principles admit, that it is equally unjuſt for thoſe who entertain the higheſt poſſible opinion of divine inſpiration, to deny all true and wholeſome reverence for the ſcriptures to thoſe who content themſelves with the loweſt. I ſay on the ſame principles. For, if every thing in the ſcriptures, even to each individual word, ſyllable, and letter, were the immediate work of God, it is but reaſonable to conclude, that the ſame cauſes which moved God himſelf immediately and miraculouſly to fix and determine every thing in the ſcriptures, even to the moſt unimportant objects, would have moved him to have ſuperintended the ſecurity and preſervation of what he had ſo exactly and minutely eſtabliſhed. Were it neceſſary, that every word and letter ſhould have been inſpired, we muſt alſo ſuppoſe it neceſſary, that every inſpired word ſhould retain the letters appointed by God, and be incapable of alteration by human words or letters. Yes, perhaps ſome one will ſay, but how many continual miracles muſt be requiſite to this! Let us however conſider, that, from the ſuppoſition,

ſuch a minute inſpiration being neceſſary to the ſalvation of mankind, if it could and muſt have happened, its requiring more or fewer miracles is of no moment to the omnipotence of God. It may be ſaid, if every thing in the ſcriptures were not ſo accurately and minutely determined by divine inſpiration, we could not have ſufficient certainty and confidence in the divine doctrines. Were this true, there muſt be no blunders of copyiſts, no inaccuracy in the text, and no accidental error in the ſcriptures; or each individual reader of them muſt have an infallible ſenſe, by which he might diſtinguiſh the divine original from the additions made by men. Even had he this, in places where alterations have actually been made, the requiſite certainty and confidence could not poſſibly be obtained: and if a man extend his faith to words and letters, this very circumſtance muſt greatly embarraſs him. If the pretext, that ſo many continual miracles are neceſſary to preſerve an unalterable purity of the text, be at all valid, the general principle muſt be firſt admitted, that God performs as few miracles as poſſible, and never more than are indiſpenſably neceſſary to the attainment of his divine purpoſes. But it would be the extreme of raſhneſs in us to determine how many or how few miracles are requiſite to anſwer the deſigns of God. However, when we find, that a certain miracle has not produced certain effects, we may venture humbly to preſume, that ſuch a miracle was not neceſſary. But here this is actually the caſe. For ſince ſo many variations are to be found in reſpect to words, ſyllables, and letters, he who ſees, and is conſcious of theſe variations, cannot poſſibly confirm his faith and hopes by the notion, that the words, ſyllables, and letters which he has before him were immediately inſpired by God.

Should any one hence conclude, that in this caſe we can never be certain of the true ſenſe of any book

book in the Bible, or of any part of a book; I anſwer, that, in determining the meaning of a whole book, or of any connected propoſition, we muſt not attend ſo much to particular words, as to the connection of all the words taken together, the ſcope of the whole, and all concomitant circumſtances. Thus, though a particular word might be falſified, we may be ſufficiently certain of the tenour of the whole: for it is highly improbable, that the whole ſhould be falſified; and were there any part altogether corrupted and erroneous, either it would have no rational meaning, or it would have a ſenſe contradictory to the purpoſe of its writer, and the general tenour of the ſcriptures. In this caſe, we could make no uſe of ſuch a text, particularly if it were not to be amended and reſtored by the help of criticiſm, and a compariſon with other manuſcripts and verſions. If, however, a text of ſcripture have an intelligible meaning, conſonant to the deſigns of its divine author, and the general ſenſe of the whole, we may be ſufficiently certain, that it is not throughout altered and corrupted. But this does not prevent a word here and there in it from being erroneous: and hence it follows, that the more we build on particular words in our expoſition, and the leſs we conſider the connection of the whole, the purpoſe of the writer, and the like, in explaining the ſenſe of a paſſage, the leſs certain muſt our interpretation be. However numerous the faults and errors that may have crept into a book of Cicero, if the whole afford an intelligible meaning, we can determine with ſufficient certainty the ſenſe of the author, and what he intended to ſay, notwithſtanding all theſe errors and imperfections, if we proceed according to the rules of ſound criticiſm. But ſhould we ſet aſide the connection of the whole, ſhutting our eyes againſt the light to be derived from the conſideration of all its parts, and a compariſon

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of them with each other, and explain his ſyſtem from a ſingle expreſſion, founding our conviction of his deſign to maintain this or that on the authenticity of a word, our certainty would reſt on very ſlight grounds. The leſs probable it is, that all we employ to aſcertain his meaning, ſhould be falſified and corrupted, the more certain is our interpretation; for it is far more improbable, that the whole ſhould be erroneous, than that a particular word ſhould be ſo.

Of the ſame nature is the well-known diſpute, whether inſpiration extend only to the ſubject or to the words of holy writ. I do not think, however, that this properly expreſſes the true point in diſpute. This ſhort anſwer may be given to the queſtion couched in ſuch terms: a ſubject without words is inconceivable, ſo that if God inſpired the ſubject, he muſt have inſpired words expreſſing it. But this anſwer decides nothing at bottom: it rather leads to the following queſtions. What is the general notion of inſpiration? How many kinds of inſpiration are there, according to this notion? And how may all this be applied to the holy ſcriptures, and their ſeveral parts?

In the moſt extenſive ſenſe of the word, we may term every communication of our thoughts and perceptions to another, or, which is the ſame thing, every action by which we determine the thoughts and perceptions of another to accord with our thoughts and perceptions an inſpiration. There are as many kinds of inſpiration, therefore, as there are modes in which this may be effected.

The ways in which a man may occaſion certain thoughts and perceptions, or certain notions, judgments, and opinions in another, or in which he may determine him to think and judge thus of a ſubject, and not otherwiſe, are various; and ſo many kinds of inſpiration muſt we admit. Language is the moſt

moſt perfect mean of propounding and imparting our thoughts to others. Thus verbal inſpiration, or inſpiration by means of oral or written words, is the firſt and moſt perfect kind. But other ſigns and ſymbols may be employed inſtead of words, to make others acquainted with our thoughts. This may be effected by ſignificant geſtures, or pictures, in particular. Thus we have a kind of inſpiration, which, to diſtinguiſh it from the verbal, we may ſtyle figurative or ſymbolical. Farther, we may impart our thoughts on a certain ſubject to another, by placing him in ſuch circumſtances, and affording him ſuch *data* and means of knowledge, that by their uſe and application he muſt neceſſarily be led to the ſame thoughts and perceptions of the ſubject as we have, or as we would impreſs on him. As this ſpecies of inſpiration differs from the preceding ones in more particularly employing the mind and underſtanding of the perſon inſpired, we may term it co-operative inſpiration. Finally, we can conceive of a communication of thoughts by an immediate influence upon the *ſenſorium*, and by its means upon the mind, whereby thoughts are excited and imparted to the intellect, directly producing conceptions, without the interference of any known means. This may be ſtyled immediate inſpiration. I believe that theſe four kinds include the whole of our notion of inſpiration, and conſtitute all its primary diviſions: though, by variouſly combining them, other kinds might be formed, and ſome, if not all, of theſe primary diviſions admit of being ſubdivided.

Inſtead of entering farther into this analyſis, I will inquire into the end that may be propoſed by inſpiration. This end muſt be confined to the perſon inſpired, or to others, or it muſt extend to both. In the firſt inſtance the perſon inſpired muſt receive ſome information, or inſtruction, neceſſary or uſeful to himſelf alone. In the ſecond, he will announce what

what is uſeful and neceſſary to others. In the third, the inſtruction imparted to him is applicable both to others and himſelf, and he receives it equally for both. If inſpiration have any rational end, a fourth caſe is not to be conceived. In the firſt caſe the inſtruction muſt be perfectly underſtood by the perſon inſpired, otherwiſe he could derive no benefit from its being imparted to him. In the third caſe he muſt underſtand it likewiſe, at leaſt in part though it may not be neceſſary for him to comprehend the whole of it, as a part may concern others alone. So far, however, as he is intereſted in it, what it announces muſt be intelligible to himſelf. In the ſecond caſe which we have mentioned, it is not neceſſary, that he ſhould underſtand what he is to deliver. He is but the meſſenger, conveying inſtructions that may be concealed from his knowledge. In this caſe, the third kind of inſpiration, which we have termed co-operative, would be inadmiſſible; and the fourth, or immediate, would ſcarcely be applicable. For the conceptions produced in the mind by this, which we muſt ſuppoſe ſubject to the general laws of the underſtanding, though excited in an extraordinary and miraculous manner, cannot poſſibly be unintelligible to the mind that forms them, and expreſſes them by words: even were the words anſwering to the ideas imbibed or impreſſed at the ſame time with them, which would render this kind of inſpiration the ſame as to the principal point with the firſt. Both the firſt and ſecond kinds of inſpiration, however, are admiſſible in this caſe. In the firſt and third caſe any of the kinds of inſpiration might take place, though all might not be equally ſuitable, which would depend on the ſubject of the inſpiration. If we would form an accurate judgment of the point in queſtion, we ſhould now inquire on what occaſion each kind of inſpiration might be moſt conveniently employed.

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The ſubject of inſpiration may be either hiſtorical, or doctrinal; it may relate to occurrences or doctrines. Occurrences may be either paſt, or future; doctrines may be either *credenda*, or *agenda*, articles of faith, or rules of conduct. Let us now conſider what kind of inſpiration would be moſt adequate to each purpoſe. To begin with paſt occurrences. Of theſe either we had teſtimonies, accounts, and traditions, prior to inſpiration, and independent of it, or we had them not. If we had them not, the third kind of inſpiration is evidently inadmiſſible: for there would exiſt no *data*, no ſources of knowledge, by the uſe of which the perſon inſpired might be brought to thoſe notions which were to be imparted to him. Neither is the ſecond ſuitable to the purpoſe, as it would be inadequate to the deſign of delivering a hiſtory in chronological order, with ſcrupulous exactneſs, and hiſtoric truth; conſequently it ought not to be employed where this is requiſite. In this caſe the firſt kind is the moſt convenient, though the fourth might indeed be employed. On the other hand, if oral or written accounts of ſuch occurrences exiſt, though either the firſt or fourth kind might be uſed likewiſe here, yet the third appears to deſerve the preference, for the following reaſons. Firſt, as it is ſufficient to the end, which, conſidering that it is the moſt natural, whilſt the others are ſupernatural, renders it preferable to theſe: ſecondly, as it will exerciſe and improve the mental faculties and underſtanding of thoſe to whom hiſtory is thus inſpired, or to whom knowledge is thus imparted; and, more eſpecially, in the third place, as it is the moſt credible, and adequate to the end of inſpiration, ſo far as the occurrences made known are to be admitted as true by others. To conceive this the more clearly, let us ſuppoſe, that a writer gives a hiſtory of a certain remote period, of which we had accounts before him, and ſtill exiſting in his time, and expreſsly declares,

clares, that his hiſtory is not compiled from thoſe accounts, but written in conſequence of immediate inſpiration from God. Now would ſuch a writer be credited by poſterity? Would after-ages rather rely on him, than believe the accounts exiſting elſewhere, in points in which his hiſtory contradicted or deviated from thoſe accounts? Would not rather the pretence of the divine revelation and inſpiration of a hiſtory, which the narrator might have known without theſe, from the accounts exiſting, from the teſtimony of witneſſes of the occurrences, or from his own knowledge (if he be writing the hiſtory of his own time) and which he might have related with ſufficient accuracy by the exerciſe of his own judgment, and the neceſſary examination, be very improbable? Much more credible would the writer's narration be, did he, in expreſs terms, or by the actual uſe of the accounts ſtill extant, limit his claim of divine inſpiration to this, that he wrote his hiſtory at the command of God, endued with ſuch faculties, and placed in ſuch circumſtances, as to be enabled to give the moſt accurate and true account poſſible, from the ſources that were in exiſtence.

Should the hiſtorian relate ſuch circumſtances and incidents as could not be the fruits of his own underſtanding, being ſuch as a mind merely human could not diſcover, he muſt be indebted for them to a higher revelation. In this caſe the claim of ſuch a revelation would not weaken his credibility, as by it he would be informed of circumſtances, which his mind could not otherwiſe have conceived. If, however, he promulgate no circumſtances or incidents undiſcoverable by human inveſtigation, ſuch an immediate revelation would be unneceſſary and improbable. As to what concerns future events, it muſt be conſidered whether they be delivered with accuracy, and in the ordinary form of hiſtory, or only under general types, with ſome degree of obſcurity,

rity, and without a preciſe deſcription of particular circumſtances. If the former, the ſame may be ſaid as of paſt occurrences of which we have no account: if the latter, no one of the kinds is more apt than the ſymbolical; and in all caſes the immediate, with which the ſymbolical may be united. Of doctrines, and rules of conduct, we muſt obſerve, that they will be either altogether arbitrary, that is not ſo connected with the natural or acquired knowledge of the perſon inſpired as to be a regular conſequence of it; or they will not be in this ſenſe arbitrary. If they be the former, they muſt be inſpired after the firſt, ſecond, or fourth manner; and according as they are more or leſs preciſely determined, the firſt and fourth, or the ſecond, will be moſt ſuitable. If the doctrines and precepts be ſuch as might flow from the previous knowledge of the inſpired perſon, the third kind of inſpiration ſeems preferable, principally for theſe reaſons, that thus they would render the ideas of the perſon inſpired more perfect, and exalt his underſtanding. For this purpoſe doctrines and their application muſt be made more clear to him, and moral precepts more engaging, and eaſier to practiſe, whilſt he is inſtructed in the principles on which they are founded.

Before I apply what has been ſaid to the holy ſcriptures in particular, I ſhall make the two following general remarks. In the firſt place, I preſume, that in the inſpiration of the holy ſcriptures, as well as in all other meaſures relative to religion, its foundation, ſupport, and propagation, God employs natural means, or means agreeable to the ordinary courſe of nature, and refrains from extraordinary, ſupernatural, or miraculous ones, as long as the former are ſufficient to effect the purpoſes of God in religion, having recourſe to miracles only when they are abſolutely neceſſary. It is true, that we cannot with certainty determine by reaſoning *a priori* when natural

natural means are ſufficient to the purpoſes of God; but analogy and compariſon may help us to ſome conjectures, and we cannot err very widely from the truth in expecting God to act in the like manner in like inſtances. My ſecond remark is this, that, in ſolving the difficult problem of divine inſpiration, that ſolution, which leaves the feweſt difficulties, perplexities, and contradictions, is to be preferred; rejecting every other, which, inſtead of removing thoſe difficulties, tends rather to make them inexplicable.

I will now examine whether the preceding theory of inſpiration may be applied to the inſpiration of the holy ſcriptures. Let us firſt conſider the different ſubjects of the ſacred writings. They contain doctrines, prophecies, and hiſtories. The doctrines are of ſuch a nature, that we may apply to them the forementioned diviſion. There are poſitive doctrines, and arbitrary precepts; not ſo in themſelves, but with reſpect to the underſtanding of man. Thus we may apply to theſe the foregoing conſequence, that they were imparted to mankind by the firſt and fourth kind of inſpiration. God has made known to the inſpired perſon, what he and others ſhould do, by means of an oral or written inſtruction; and this inſtruction was communicated ſupernaturally, as no ordinary or natural inſtruction would have been ſufficient to the purpoſe. But again, natural means were as much as poſſible employed, and the laws of human reaſon as little as might be deviated from. Thus the moſt important inſtruction muſt have been communicated in human guiſe, and in the manner of common information. Superior beings muſt have appeared as men, and uttered human words, or the perſon inſpired muſt at leaſt have heard a human voice. The moſt weighty religious precepts were imparted to the apoſtles by the Son of God in human form, and in a natural manner. In ſome extraordinary

dinary cases only, for which they were not prepared, and in which their ignorance might have led them into great perplexity, a supernatural revelation was communicated to them. So far, however, as these truths and precepts might have followed of themselves from their natural and acquired knowledge, we may presume, that the third species of inspiration was combined with the first. Thus from the union of these two kinds the most perfect inspiration arose; whence we may conclude, that they were the most usual, though without exclusion of the second and fourth. Those doctrines and precepts which are not arbitrary, but merely rational, as in some of the Psalms for instance, the Proverbs of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, and the book of Job, may aptly be referred to the third species, and the same may be said of them as of history.

Prophecies come under the second and fourth kinds of inspiration. They are imparted by vision and symbolical perceptions in trances or dreams, in which future events are represented as in a picture, or in which human voices and words are heard. This distinction is here to be made, that, when the subject of the prophecy is made known to the prophet by external types, the second kind takes place: but when it is seen or heard by means of an immediate influence on his imagination, the fourth. How far this fourth kind of inspiration is more or less natural, I shall not venture to determine. It is so far supernatural, however, that one man cannot inspire another by its means, but only God himself, or perhaps some being superior to man, under his direction: and inasmuch as we can form no idea of the operation which produces a series of conceptions in the mind, not founded on its former ideas, on its previously acquired knowledge, or on any external perceptions, this kind of inspiration is not only supernatural, but the most wonderful of all. One

thing, however, I muſt obſerve, that it happens for the moſt part, in all probability, if not conſtantly, in a dream or trance. And the reaſon of this ſeems to be, that the perſon inſpired might have a remarkable ground of diſtinction, whereby to diſcriminate the divine inſpiration from his own thoughts and conceptions. This would be difficult, if not impoſſible, were the inſpiration confounded with the chain of his ordinary conceptions, without any ſtriking mark of diſtinction, and were it preceded by no warning to point it out as extraordinary and divine. A mere internal admonition, that what a man is about to think will be by divine inſpiration, ſeems ſcarcely ſufficient to ſecure him from ſelf-deception, if the admonition be unaccompanied with deciſive external circumſtances, or if the perſon inſpired be aſſured only by his natural conceptions. If ſuch criterions fail, he cannot be certain, that the thought of an approaching inſpiration itſelf is not his own natural conception, and particularly if he be accuſtomed to expect inſpirations from God. This remark is perfectly conſonant to what we learn of immediate inſpiration from the holy ſcriptures. When the prophets ſay: the ſpirit of the Lord is upon me: if we ſuppoſe it to mean, that the ſpirit came over them, or fell upon them, it will unqueſtionably ſignify a ſtate of ſupernatural trance. The prophets received what was revealed to them in viſions and dreams. When Paul was honoured with that high revelation, he was entranced, ſo that he knew not whether he was in the body, or out of the body. Peter ſaw a viſion, when he was inſtructed, that the diſtinction betwixt the Jews and Gentiles ſhould be done away. An angel appeared to him in priſon, to acquaint him, that he ſhould go out of it free. We find, that, in every town upon his journey, the ſpirit informed Paul, by prophets, and not by an indiſcriminate inſpiration, that affliction and bondage awaited him in Jeruſalem.

At

At another time, a man ſtood by him in a dream, telling him what he was to do. Theſe, and many other examples which I could produce, ſeem to ſhew, firſt, that, when an immediate inſpiration took place, it happened in trances or dreams; ſecondly, that, when this did not occur, the divine inſtruction was communicated by means of external appearances, intelligible expreſſions, or other ſigns; and thirdly, that every immediate inſpiration was accompanied with ſuch remarkable and extraordinary circumſtances as convinced both the inſpired perſon and others of a ſupernatural influence.

A knowledge of paſt occurrences was imparted, where it was poſſible, by means of the third ſpecies of inſpiration. Here we may limit the divine inſpiration to a particular call of God, or a requiſition from providence to write (a call that might be communicated to the hiſtorian by means of the remarkable circumſtances in which he was placed) to the indication of the neceſſary materials, to the gift of requiſite attention, ability, and love of truth, and finally to ſuch a combination of circumſtances, as would produce a hiſtory as accurate and perfect as the ſources whence it was derived would admit, and fully adequate to the purpoſe for which it was written. On theſe principles, as it appears to me, ſhould we form our judgment of the hiſtorical writers of the Old Teſtament. They have compiled a true and accurate hiſtory from the accounts and documents which they had before them. They frequently refer to thoſe more ancient accounts, as the ſources and vouchers of their narration. If in theſe they found circumſtances not true, which however we have no reaſon to preſume, they muſt have recorded them, ſuppoſing them not ſufficiently important to have prevented the deſign and utility of their hiſtory. Excepting this caſe, then, which is not a very probable one, we muſt allow them the ſame credibility

as a profane hiſtorian, whoſe hiſtory of ancient times is interſperſed with improbable ſtories foreign to his ſubject. This would be ſo far from weakening his authority, that it would rather be a proof of his authenticity: for it was the characteriſtic of the earlieſt ages to relate natural occurrences in a poetical and allegorical ſtyle, to dreſs up true hiſtory in the imagery of fancy, and to give it an appearance of the marvellous, by which none who knew how to ſtrip it of its poetic garb were deceived. Such being the characteriſtic of the firſt ages, and the moſt ancient records we have being written in ſuch a ſtyle, it was neceſſary for the hiſtorian carefully to purſue the ſame track, and by no means diveſt his account of thoſe traits, which would tend to prove his veracity to poſterity.

On theſe principles, the hiſtory of the New Teſtament has a great pre-eminence over that of the Old, in this reſpect, that its writers deliver the hiſtory of their own times, and relate things which they ſaw with their own eyes, and heard with their own ears, or which they received from immediate eye or ear-witneſſes. As they tell what they heard from the word of life, what they had ſeen with their eyes, and what they had felt with their hands, or as they had received it from thoſe who ſaw all from the beginning, and were miniſters of the word, and as they relate every thing from the commencement, they have a claim to the confidence of their readers: and when they advance this, they appear by the ſtyle of their hiſtory, to lay claim only to human credibility, though to the higheſt degree of it. If to this we add what has been ſaid of that ſpecies of inſpiration, according to which they wrote, their hiſtory will not want any of that divine authority that can be attributed to the teſtimony of an hiſtorian, who, as I ſhall hereafter ſhew, muſt alſo retain credibility as a man. It will diminiſh the general authority of their hiſtory

hiſtory as little as its utility, let a man decide as he will, whether they could be or actually were exempted from all trifling inaccuracies, or defect of memory, in point of time or other unimportant concomitant circumſtances; or, which is far more probable, in the extraordinary circumſtances in which they were placed, and with their ſcrupulous exactitude, permitted themſelves to leave gaps, where they knew not ſome incident with certainty. We have at leaſt no ſufficient reaſon to ſuppoſe them liable to ſuch faults: and the few apparent contradictions in their accounts may proceed from our ignorance of many particular circumſtances, from their thorough conviction of the truth of their hiſtory, and the neglect of relating events after a regular plan concerted amongſt themſelves thence ariſing, and from the various ſituations and points of view from which they ſaw particular occurrences. Their deviation from chronological order may be defended from the conſideration, that it is by no means an indiſpenſable duty of an hiſtorian to relate events ſtrictly in the order of time, that the ſacred writers never profeſſed to do this, and that their writings are not deficient in order, as they have obſerved that of place, or of ſimilar and correſpondent incidents. This mode of juſtifying them ſeems to me at leaſt far preferable to that of ſuppoſing, that they have actually followed a ſtrict chronological order, and that the ſame occurrence happened more than once, which is highly improbable.

Thoſe doctrines and precepts which they were capable of deducing from the truths which were known or communicated to them, by the natural powers of their underſtanding, ſeem not to have required an immediate inſpiration. Such an inſpiration would have been of no advantage, and would have converted the ſacred writers into ſpeaking-trumpets, which utter juſt as many words as are put

into them, and no more, or amanuenſes, writing only what is dictated to them. Beſides what I have already ſaid on this ſubject, the following reaſons ſeem to prove the reverſe of this ſuppoſition.

In the firſt place, it is apparent from their writings, that what they deliver has been revolved in their own minds. They argue and conclude, they lay down principles and conſequences, and thence frame new inductions. Had they a particular and immediate revelation of what they thus prove, all this would be in ſome reſpects unneceſſary, in others improper. In that caſe, *the Lord ſaid it*, would have been the only valid argument, and a convincing one to thoſe who admitted their divine inſpiration. This argument would have been equally valid for the fundamental truths of their ſyſtem, and for the minuter branches ariſing from their developement. We may require a man to believe us on our words (and who might with more propriety require thus to be believed than the apoſtles, were they immediately inſpired in every thing they wrote?) and ſo far as we have a right to require this we need not enter into any proof of the matter to be believed. What we have to prove, perhaps, is our title to ſuch a belief. Nay, it may ſometimes be injurious to a good cauſe, to permit ourſelves to enter into an unneceſſary demonſtration, as when the proof is in itſelf difficult, and our arguments are not ſufficiently clear and perſuaſive to thoſe whom we would convince. In ſuch a caſe, having waved our greateſt advantage, and appealed to the weight of our arguments, and the judgment of thoſe whom we would convince, we could no longer lay claim to being believed on our aſſertion, but would have unneceſſarily ſubmitted ourſelves to the deciſion of people who were not, perhaps, proper judges of the queſtion. If we do not ſucceed in ſatisfying them with our arguments, we have given them a right to reject our aſſertion.

Let

Let any one determine, whether this is not the caſe with the apoſtle Paul, who frequently confirms, what he might have placed beyond a doubt by a mere appeal to that immediate inſpiration from which he ſpoke, by a long ſeries of arguments from revealed truths, invites his readers themſelves, for their conviction, to examine the relation of what he advances to the word of God, and leaves it to a difficult demonſtration *(but theſe are things not eaſy to be underſtood)* to decide, whether it ſhould be admitted, or rejected. His arguments are in themſelves, it is true, neither equivocal nor indeciſive, but they might eaſily be ſo to thoſe whom the apoſtle would convince. At all events, however, this prolixity of argumentation was unneceſſary, and a far more difficult mode of convincing, than an appeal to immediate inſpiration, which might have been more eaſily proved, had the apoſtle been in reality immediately inſpired in every thing he wrote.

As what I have hitherto ſaid againſt the immediate inſpiration of the apoſtolic writers, when they do not lay claim to a particular revelation, holds more eſpecially with regard to St. Paul, and his epiſtles, I may be permitted ſome remarks relative to that apoſtle. Peter ſays of him, that in his letters are things difficult to be underſtood. But we could ſcarcely allow this, were the words he utters put into his mouth by the ſpirit of God. In ſuch a caſe we might preſume, that perſpicuity would have been preferred to an obſcure ſtyle. If it be ſaid: the holy ſpirit dictated in the ſtyle in which Paul himſelf would have written: ſuch a dictation appears altogether unneceſſary, as it would not contribute to the elucidation of the learned apoſtle's ideas, or to placing them in a clearer order. Beſides, Peter ſays further, that Paul wrote according to the wiſdom given to him. What uſe would he have made of this wiſdom, had he written as a mere amanuenſis?

What were the advantages of his learning, and profound ſcience, if his tongue or hand alone had been employed in the delivery of divine truths, and not his underſtanding? This expreſſion ſeems to me to accord with what I have ſaid of the inſpiration of doctrines. Beſides their own ſtock of knowledge and wiſdom, acquired by natural means, the apoſtles had received the neceſſary illumination and inſtruction, either by the firſt or fourth kind of inſpiration, and, when they taught, were left to this wiſdom as a true and competent guide, by means of which they more amply unfolded the revealed inſtruction, aſſimilated in their minds with their own knowledge, applied it to particular caſes, and placed it in the proper order and connection. The other apoſtles received their inſtructions immediately from Chriſt; and where this inſtruction was inſufficient, the want was ſupplied by occaſional revelation. It does not appear probable to me, that they were immediately indebted to the gift of the Holy Ghoſt, which they received at the feaſt of Pentecoſt, for the goſpel truths which they preached. Neceſſary as this extraordinary gift was in every point of view, that they might bear teſtimony of Jeſus with ſucceſs, I cannot perſuade myſelf, that it conſiſted in a conſtant and uninterrupted inſpiration of thoſe truths. This gift could not render particular inſpirations unneceſſary, for they themſelves communicated the Holy Ghoſt to others, who did not thereby become inſpired, and were far from being exalted to that high degree of illumination which the apoſtles attained. Finally, Jeſus himſelf declares, that the office of the Holy Ghoſt was to recal to their minds the remembrance of what he had ſaid to them, ſome parts of which they had not comprehended, and others forgotten, thus to lead them in the way of truth, and render the inſtructions they had received from him uſeful and profitable.—But how does this affect the

apoſtle

apoſtle Paul? He was not fortunate enough to be taught by Jeſus during his abode upon earth, and conſequently muſt have received his knowledge by inſpiration, as he at different times expreſsly declares, for inſtance, 1 Cor. ii. No doubt he had learnt many things from the other apoſtles, with whom he had actually converſed concerning the truth, as he aſſerts Gal. ii. 2. As, in the remarkable inſtance firſt mentioned, he declares himſelf to have been immediately inſtructed by Jeſus, it thence appears probable, that all he had learnt was not acquired in this manner. How the ſum of the chriſtian doctrines was revealed to the apoſtle Paul is not eaſy to determine: were I permitted a conjecture, I would ſay, that the grand outline of chriſtianity was imparted to him in a revelation or viſion, in which Chriſt, his office, ſufferings, and death were repreſented to him as the antitypes of the high prieſt and ſacrifices of the Levitical law. With this he might have been excited to a diligent compariſon of the types with their antitypes. This will explain to us why he employs this compariſon more frequently than any other apoſtle, if he be not the only one who does it, explains chriſtianity from the religious worſhip of the Jews, and repreſents it as the antitype or fulfilling of the Moſaical diſpenſation.

Secondly; The apoſtles do not pretend to an immediate inſpiration of all their words, when they taught orally or by writing. Paul frequently ſpeaks with a kind of doubtfulneſs, and inconcluſive circumſpection, when he determines caſes of conſcience, and gives precepts to certain perſons, and under certain circumſtances. And not without reaſon. For when he unfolds the grand principles and precepts of chriſtianity revealed to him, and applies them to particular caſes, his certainty, that a doctrine or precept is a doctrine or commandment of the Lord, muſt be leſs in proportion as it is more remote from

thoſe

thoſe firſt principles, and connected with them by a greater number of intermediate ideas. Hence it was, that ſometimes he would not venture to give what he ſays for any thing more than his own private opinion, and, which appears to me very important, makes a diſtinction between it and the commandments of God. Not I, ſays he, but the Lord: I and not the Lord. 1 Cor. vii. 10. 12. Were he merely a writer who ſet down what another thought, ſuch expreſſions, allege what you will to render them conſiſtent with immediate inſpiration, would be moſt improper and abſurd.

Thirdly; The occaſionally interſperſing the precepts of chriſtianity with perſonal and domeſtic circumſtances, not immediately connected with them, ſeems to prove, that on theſe occaſions the pens of the apoſtles were not guided by the ſpirit of God. Such are the ſalutations, profeſſions of friendſhip, advice to Timothy reſpecting diet, the mentioning of a cloak and books, and the whole, though excellent, Epiſtle to Philemon. It may be ſaid, that the mentioning of thoſe things might have been on many accounts uſeful, even ſuppoſing them to have been inſpired. Not to obſerve, that the practical inferences drawn from ſuch paſſages in oppoſition to certain fooliſh ſectaries are in general very ſuperfluous and frequently forced (as for inſtance, when it is attempted to prove the utility of books, and the propriety of ſtudy, againſt thoſe much to be pitied perſons who hold them as uſeleſs and ſinful, from the command of Paul to Timothy, to bring with him the books he had left at Troas) the ſame would follow, were it admitted, that the apoſtle delivered only his own private opinion. Who could be ſuppoſed to know better than Paul what was permitted to a chriſtian? Who would deſire to be more devout and religious than that great apoſtle?

Fourthly;

Fourthly; Inſtead of the whole of Chriſt's diſcourſes, the evangeliſts frequently give us only ſhort extracts of them, containing, perhaps, what they had particularly remarked, and what they remembered with ſufficient clearneſs and certainty. Theſe ſhort fragments often occaſion ſome obſcurity, as in the ſermon on the mount, of which probably a very ſmall part indeed is preſerved to us. If what we have of it be written faithfully and accurately from memory, we ought the leſs to regret its ſhortneſs and obſcurity, which, under ſuch circumſtances, was not to be avoided, as it is a proof of the care and fidelity of the writers, who preferred giving little with certainty to much with doubt, and fragments, though with ſome obſcurity, to a connected whole, made by ſupplying the defects of their memory from their own imagination. Totally different would the caſe be, were this diſcourſe of Jeſus written not from memory, but from immediate inſpiration. Had the original been dictated, we might reaſonably preſume, that we ſhould have found it as complete and connected as could be required; and even had it been neceſſary, that this intereſting diſcourſe ſhould have been abridged, it would have coſt the ſpirit of truth, that inſpired the writers, no greater miracle to have made it more intelligible, by a leſs degree of brevity and inaccuracy. The writers of the life of Jeſus have done all that could be required of men left to their own veracity, judgment and memory, though the latter were exalted in the extraordinary circumſtances in which they were placed. But were the treaſures of Omniſcience laid open to them, and the diſcourſe of Jeſus deſerved to have been handed down to poſterity in a more perfect, connected, and perſpicuous manner, if they have made no uſe of thoſe treaſures, or uſed them ſo little to our ſatisfaction, this forbearance appears to us ſo much the more ſtrange and incomprehenſible, as it would render that

ſupernatural

ſupernatural communication of a more ample account in a great meaſure uſeleſs and ſuperfluous. If we ſuppoſe any one, after having heard a remarkable but very long diſcourſe, to ſet down the moſt important parts that he remembered, and others, who were alſo preſent, to do the ſame, their performances would exactly reſemble the extracts of certain diſcourſes of Jeſus given us by the evangeliſts. Two of them would frequently give us the ſame things, in the very ſame words, but one would often want what would be found in the other, and one would be on the whole leſs intelligible than the other, from the omiſſion of particular circumſtances, though on the other hand it might be in ſome caſes more clear. Thus they would ſerve to illuſtrate each other, and the reader would find a compenſation for the perplexities remaining, in the aſſurance he would thence receive, that the writers had not copied one another, and that they had not forged or falſified the whole in concert. Now on the ſuppoſition, that the diſcourſe was at the ſame time copied *verbatim*, and that theſe two abridgers ſaw this copy, rectifying and filling up the deficiencies of their abſtracts by it, if they did not completely tranſcribe it, we ſhould find no conſiderable variation between the two, ſo as to occaſion a perplexity or apparent contradiction. If, then, we find ſuch, we muſt preſume, either that they had no ſuch copy, or that they did not make uſe of it.

Still there is a particular difficulty with reſpect to ſuch ſpeeches of Jeſus as were ſpoken only once, on occaſion of ſome feſtival, which were not ſufficiently copious to require an abridgment, and were too important for his diſciples to permit themſelves purpoſely to make any alteration in them. Such are the words of Jeſus at the inſtitution of the holy ſupper. Four times they are related, and always with ſome little variation. Matthew leaves out the addition to *this is my body, which is given or broken for*

for you, and alſo the words that are in one inſtance twice repeated, *this do in remembrance of me:* but he ſays, *this is my blood of the New Teſtament, which is ſhed for many* (not, *for you*) *for the remiſſion of ſins.* Mark is ſtill ſhorter; he leaves out the words, *drink all of you thereof*, and alſo, *for the remiſſion of ſins.* Luke has the addition, *which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me*, and further, *this cup is the New Teſtament in my blood, which is ſhed for you.* Paul relates theſe words moſt fully. I ſhall firſt notice the alteration that he makes in attributing to Jeſus the words, *which is broken for you*, inſtead of, *which is given for you.* He ſays twice, *in remembrance of me*, which none of the others does, and the laſt time with the important addition, *as often as ye drink:* finally he ſays, *this cup is the New Teſtament in my blood*, leaving out, *that is ſhed for many*, according to Matthew, and *for you*, according to Luke, *for the remiſſion of ſins.* Theſe variations, additions, and omiſſions, it is true, do not alter the ſenſe of the words and inſtitution of Jeſus in any material point: ſtill they are actual alterations of one and the ſame ſpeech, which, as it was only once ſpoken, could not poſſibly have been ſpoken with all theſe variations. We can only ſuppoſe one of the evangeliſts, therefore, to have repeated the words of our Redeemer with accuracy, and the others to have made ſome alteration, omiſſion, or addition: or probably not one of them has cited them exactly. If either have done it, however, my opinion would be in favour of St. Paul, as he ſeems to lay claim to a particular revelation.

On the ſuppoſition, that the evangeliſts wrote theſe words of Jeſus not from memory, and according to their general purport, but from a particular inſpiration, this varying relation of a ſpeech, which, as has been obſerved, was not ſo prolix as to require an intentional abbreviation, and was ſufficiently important

tant to be given at full length, is totally inexplicable. In the firſt place, the ſpirit of inſpiration was the ſpirit of wiſdom and truth. Truth requires, that the words attributed to any one be related exactly as they were ſpoken, and not otherwiſe, particularly when it is ſo ſaid. *Thus ſaid he*, will not allow of any abridgment, or an expreſſion of the ſpeaker's meaning in terms different from his own. Unqueſtionably the ſpirit of inſpiration knew preciſely the words which Jeſus ſpoke, and the order in which they were ſpoken: what then could prevent the evangeliſts from writing them exactly as they were uttered, if they were dictated to them by that ſpirit? It muſt be admitted, that it was impoſſible for them to write otherwiſe than as it was dictated to them: and why ſhould the ſame ſpeech be dictated by the ſame ſpirit of truth differently to each? To ſay, that the evangeliſts were in this inſtance inſpired by the ſpirit of truth, would be the ſame thing as if they had copied the ſpeech from the moſt exact protocol; and how ſhould there be protocols of the ſame ſpeech deſignedly differing from each other? But their variations from each other, and conſequently from an accurate protocol, evidently prove, that they did not copy from any one. Where then would have been the uſe of ſuch inſpiration, or what would it have availed them to have had an authentic copy before their eyes, if they were unable, or unwilling, to write after them, or to employ them in ſupplying the deficiencies, or correcting the errors of their memory? Is it not obvious, that the ſuppoſition of an immediate inſpiration, in caſes where they have notwithſtanding written as though they poſſeſſed it not, annihilates the only valid juſtification of their want of agreement, additions, or omiſſions, and even deſtroys that credit which we might give their narration, if they wrote from memory? The credibility of their teſtimony would gain nothing by this ſuppoſition, which

which it would not from the circumſtance of their variations, on the preſumption, that they were not immediately inſpired. Theſe variations prove their not having written in concert, the greateſt natural confidence in the truth of things of which they had no doubt, and the conſequent neglect of all prudential and cautious obſervance of things of little moment to give an air of truth to their ſtory. On the ſcheme of immediate inſpiration, I do not ſee how theſe could be brought in ſupport of their credibility: for this ſeems to me to be the ſame as if they wrote from one ſource, and after the ſame original; and all their claim to our belief reſts on the truth and preciſion of the document from which they drew their teſtimony. So far as what they ſay is not from their own memory, but taken from a certain document, or to be conſidered as ſuch, the arguments for or againſt their veracity, derived from their particular agreement or variation, are of no weight. When I apply this to the writers of the life of Jeſus, it appears to me, that the ſuppoſition of an immediate inſpiration in things which they might have related from their own teſtimony, having ſeen and heard them, takes from them what conſtitutes the proper credibility of a witneſs, which we term *fidem humanam*, and leaves no other ground for our believing them, than our opinion of an immediate inſpiration, to which they are indebted for all they ſay: conſequently all the arguments to be drawn from the compariſon of various teſtimonies in ſupport of their veracity fall to the ground. Thus the circumſtance, that they themſelves heard or ſaw what they relate, or carefully recite them after eye or ear-witneſſes, a circumſtance on which they appear to have laid great ſtreſs, tends not in the leaſt to the conviction of their readers: for, if we ſuppoſe an immediate inſpiration to have taken place, it was unneceſſary for them to have had any previous knowledge of what was dictated to them, as this one

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ſource of truth, rendered every other ſuperfluous. Still, if we would convince an unbeliever of the truth of the goſpel hiſtory, we muſt begin with proving the validity, care, certainty and veracity of its teſtimony, from an examination and compariſon of its accounts, as if we ſpoke of mere human witneſſes to tranſactions, and not as copyiſts of what was laid before them. It may be ſaid, that it is allowable to argue from falſe grounds, to gain opponents who will not admit the truth: but what would this avail, when, after having convinced our antagoniſt by falſe poſitions, we again reject thoſe poſitions, deny the human credibility of the goſpel hiſtorians, and, recurring to immediate inſpiration, require them to believe their teſtimony, on grounds not only different from the former, but which exclude them? Would not thoſe whom we ſhould endeavour to lead to conviction by ſuch oppoſite ways be altogether confounded? And might they not ſay: you have at length convinced me, that all the credibility of the evangeliſts, who have delivered to the world an account of Jeſus and his doctrines with ſuch great care, circumſpection, and love of truth, ariſes from a circumſtance to which no witneſs or hiſtorian has any pretenſions. I might readily grant, that their wonderful agreement in the main points of their narration, and the many other proofs of their authenticity, that impreſs themſelves on the mind of an unprejudiced, feeling, and attentive reader, indicate the finger of God, and the direction of providence, by which they were ſelected as the moſt capable and fit for the purpoſe, endowed with ſuch pre-eminent gifts, adequate knowledge, and ardent zeal for the truth, and placed in ſuch advantageous circumſtances, that its great ends muſt be attained by their teſtimony. This ſeems to me all that a reaſonable man, who thinks juſtly, can require, to ſatisfy himſelf of their credibility: it is alſo all that we can aſcribe

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to them, if we would allow them any credit as actual witneſſes. If you hold them out to me in this light, I examine them, and find them worthy of being believed. But if, not content with this, you ſeek farther to confirm their teſtimony, and for this well-meant purpoſe aſcribe to them an immediate inſpiration, you will deſtroy all the favourable impreſſions, that had been made on my mind, of their truth, capability, and the like. Their qualities and character as witneſſes become altogether inſignificant to me, when I conſider them in the light of mere copyiſts, and you make me ſuſpect the means by which you led me to conviction. Do you not perceive, that, endeavouring to augment the credibility of their teſtimony by this aſſumption, you in fact leſſen it? You thus found all the truth of their narration on the ſingle principle, that they were inſpired in the manner before-mentioned. Admitting, that they ſaid this of themſelves as clearly and deciſively as you aſſert it of them, no reaſoning on their character, capability, or the like, as we could judge of them from what they wrote (for the character of a mere copyiſt cannot be diſcovered from what he writes) could aſſure us that they ſpoke the truth, when they gave themſelves out for inſpired, but only an immediate infallible perception of it: and thus, it ſeems, we ourſelves muſt be inſpired, to be certain that they were ſo.

Fifthly; Were the apoſtles under the influence of an immediate inſpiration, whenever the truths of chriſtianity preſented themſelves to their minds, or they delivered them to others, either by ſpeech or writing, it ſeems to me, that they could not have had a lively and effectual knowledge of them, and thus could not have communicated them to others in the moſt forcible and efficacious manner. The notions which they received and imparted were not their own, or the production of their mental faculties, but

infuſed into them: hence all the conſequences deduced from thoſe notions, and founded on them alone, muſt be as foreign to the apoſtles, and as little to be aſcribed to them, as the notions themſelves. Thus their religious opinions were no more their own, than the opinions of him who dictates a letter, are thoſe of him who writes it. It would avail little to ſay, that the apoſtles were left to themſelves when they meditated on the doctrines of chriſtianity, but not when they delivered them to others. For, let me aſk, was it not the deſign of their meditation on thoſe truths, that they ſhould be ſaved, and of their delivery of them, that others ſhould be ſo? If, then, their own reflection, excluſive of all immediate inſpiration, were ſufficient to effect their own ſalvation (and if it were inſufficient, none of their chriſtian notions, virtues, and works, or any thing moral in them, was proper to themſelves) had they been left to themſelves in the delivery of them, as they would have expreſſed their thoughts in the manner in which they were preſent to their minds, it would have been ſufficient to the ſalvation of others. All that was neceſſary for them, as teachers, to make others wiſe to ſalvation, was the gift of expreſſing what they thought with order, aptneſs, and perſpicuity: which gift was imparted to them once for all, and appertained to that wiſdom with which they were endued. Beſides, a man eaſily expreſſes with perſpicuity what he clearly conceives.

Let us alſo farther conſider, that the apoſtolical writings do not contain doctrines merely ſpeculative, and dry theories, but practical truths, which the ſacred writers themſelves felt, and which were by them made fruitful: they ſpoke from the fulneſs of a heart moved and ſanctified by the doctrines they delivered. All they preach is practical, and every where ſhews, that their notions were conformable to the ſpirit of chriſtianity. That which thus comes from the heart muſt

muſt go to the heart, and their readers and hearers muſt have caught that noble fire, which, iſſuing from their breaſts animated their words: but this would not happen, unleſs they ſuppoſed, that the perceptions, opinions, and affections expreſſed by the apoſtles were their own, originating from their own frame of mind and diſpoſition, and flowing from their own hearts. This impreſſion, however, would be at once enfeebled or annihilated, were it believed, or merely conjectured, that they were not left to their own hearts, but wrote under the guidance of ſome foreign influence. A reader of the apoſtolical writings, who believes the immediate inſpiration of every word and thought, and, as will naturally be the caſe, does not forget this as he reads, will think, perhaps, ſomewhat in the following manner of the paſſage where Paul praiſes charity, 1 Cor. xiii. How excellent thoſe thoughts! How exalted, how affecting, the apoſtle's deſcription of charity! How forcibly is its ſupereminence expreſſed! How muſt the heart of him who ſo valued it, and painted it in ſo maſterly a manner, have been warmed and penetrated by it! But what proof have I, that the apoſtle actually felt what flowed from his pen, and that he did not praiſe virtue with the lips of Balaam? The opinions, ideas, and words, which I read, are not his, but he was inſpired ſo to write, even though he thought differently. I learn from this only what he, and what I, ought to think and conceive: but his words by no means convince me, that his heart was actually ſo charitable, and his character actually ſo virtuous, or even that it is poſſible for man to attain ſuch exalted notions. Probably, when he wrote this, he was only as ſounding braſs, or as a tinkling cymbal.

On the ſuppoſition, that every word is immediately inſpired, I know not what could be ſaid to countervail theſe reflections, and to give the doctrines of the

apoſtle due weight and influence. Were we to ſay, the ſpirit of inſpiration ſo adapted itſelf to the actual ideas and opinions of the ſacred writer, as to inſpire him with no others but thoſe which he really felt and thought, only perhaps giving them the moſt ſuitable expreſſions; it might be anſwered: where then was the neceſſity of his being inſpired, to ſay what he might have ſaid without inſpiration, and which, if his feelings and notions were true and juſt, he muſt have expreſſed truly in the ſimple, artleſs language of the heart? This inſpiration which you ſuppoſe, was unneceſſary, of no uſe, and gives the whole a diſadvantageous aſpect. It was uſeleſs, ſince to be convinced that what he recommends is true, godly, and chriſtian, I need only perceive its perfect conſonance to the doctrines and precepts of Chriſt, without its being neceſſary to ſuppoſe that it was divinely inſpired for my farther conviction. To be aſſured, however, that it is poſſible for me to attain ſuch exalted notions, and to be inſtigated to endeavour after ſuch virtue, it is of much importance to me to know how much of this virtue Paul himſelf poſſeſſed; of which nothing can ſo well and fully convince me as his own expreſſions.

If it be admitted, then, that the diſcourſes of the apoſtles have gained in perſpicuity, preciſion, and certainty, by an immediate inſpiration throughout, they muſt on the other hand have loſt with reſpect to their power of moving and edifying. The loſs is certain; but that they have gained may be diſputed. For the meſſengers of God have ever ſpoken a language exhibiting all thoſe faults and unavoidable imperfections which human language cannot be without, if it be intelligible, inſtructive, and efficient. It is ſaid, that a greater degree of certainty ariſes from the belief, that every word comes immediately from God. But might we not have a ſufficient degree of certainty, without ſuppoſing an immediate inſpiration

inſpiration of every thing they wrote? If we conceive, that the ſacred writers had the requiſite ſincerity and abilities to bear teſtimony of Jeſus and his doctrines, and that as often as they lay claim to a divine revelation, or inſtruction from Chriſt, they actually received this revelation or inſtruction, and have delivered it faithfully and accurately, I know not what more a reaſonable man can require to edify by their writings, and to be convinced, that he actually reads divine truths. Should any doubts remain of their having properly applied the divine revelations and inſtructions, with which they were honoured, and of their having deduced juſt conſequences from them, unmixed with any falſe notions, let us only do what they themſelves require of their readers and hearers: let us prove their writings by the teſt of the divine truths which they have delivered. Let us examine whether their conceptions of the doctrines of chriſtianity agree with the word of the Lord, and with the revelations to which they appeal. Let us inquire whether they adhere to the divine truth in their explanations and developement of it, and whether their conſequences be really valid, and deducible from it. If we find this, and no one has hitherto proved the contrary, we ſhould be unreaſonable and unjuſt not to be ſatisfied with the degree and kind of divine inſpiration here admitted. Let us duly conſider, that, were the ſacred writers perfectly ſincere and faithful in what they deliver, their writings muſt have a ſufficient degree of credibility for every man, ſince they were placed by God in circumſtances ſo extraordinarily favourable, that they could and muſt teach the truths of the goſpel with ſufficient perfection. Thus their integrity, and love of truth, are the grand points on which the credit to be given to their doctrines depends. Were they ſincere, we may be certain, without ſuppoſing all their words to have been immediately inſpired, that their

writings diſplay the true ſpirit of chriſtianity and revelation. If, however, they were wanting in love of truth and integrity, or we be not fully aſſured they were not, our belief of an immediate inſpiration cannot ſatisfy or confirm us: for this belief muſt be founded on their own aſſertion and teſtimony, which, if we doubt their truth and ſincerity, can be of no weight. Hence we ſee how important and indiſpenſable integrity and a love of truth, which, with the neceſſary abilities, conſtitute what we term *fidem humanam*, are for a ſacred writer, whether of hiſtory, doctrines, or precepts, if he would actually obtain our truſt and confidence.

PROP. XXVIII. p. 142.

On Miracles.

MIRACLES conſtitute an important object of inquiry, both to the defenders and opponents of the chriſtian revelation. In modern times, more eſpecially, their nature and demonſtrability have been carefully inveſtigated, and endeavours have been uſed to ſupport them againſt the objections of ſceptics and unbelievers. Much, however, as has been written on both ſides of the queſtion, what our author has advanced in his XXVIIIth propoſition, in explanation and defence of miracles, ſeems to me perfectly juſt, and in ſome meaſure new. His ideas on the ſubject he has given, as uſual, with brevity. I am perſuaded, therefore, that a more ample developement of them will not be without uſe.

In the firſt place it may be aſked: are miracles ſo far ſupernatural as to be actually repugnant to the nature of things, and true and proper exceptions to the general plan of God, according to which he governs the world, and effects his purpoſes in it; or

or are they ſupernatural only ſo far as, from our knowledge and views of the nature of things, their powers, and laws of action, they appear to us to be deviations from the general ſcheme of providence, and contradictory to nature? A thorough examination of this queſtion will, I believe, throw great light on the ſubject of miracles.

The firſt notion of a miracle that ſtrikes our minds is, that it is an extraordinary and unuſual occurrence, deviating from general experience. This we may admit, at leaſt as a definition of the term. But if we bring miracles in proof of a divine miſſion, or a more immediate revelation, the queſtion is, whether miracles, conſidered as merely extraordinary and unuſual occurrences, be ſufficient to ſtamp credit on a meſſenger aſſerted to be from God, or it be neceſſary, to the full conviction of thoſe to whom he is ſent, that they diſcover in his works a power far beyond that of nature. They who confine the idea of a miracle merely to the unuſual and extraordinary, to require nothing more to the demonſtrability of miracles, maintain that the circumſtance of a very unuſual occurrence, brought as a proof of a divine miſſion, effected at the nod and command of the divine meſſenger, exactly at the time, and under ſuch circumſtances that it cannot be attributed to the apparently producing cauſe, is a ſufficient demonſtration, that the Lord of nature declares himſelf thereby. This notion of miracles ſets aſide the objection made by many to the immediate interpoſition of God, that, if they be not contradictions to the general ſcheme of providence, they muſt be conſidered as alterations and improvements in it. And theſe would more eaſily reconcile themſelves to miracles, were they conſidered merely as extraordinary effects, produced in ways hidden from us though natural, and by inſcrutable means, but ſo wiſely ordered by providence, as to confirm our belief in new inſtructions

from God, in an unequivocal manner. Bonnet, in his philoſophical inquiry into the arguments for chriſtianity, has lately conſidered miracles in this light. According to him, they are occurrences which were included in the eſtabliſhed principles of nature, or founded on the active powers of the world, but ſo conſtituted as in appearance not to ariſe from the uſual order of things. This is, in his opinion, clear and evident, when they are not ſo related to the apparent means employed to produce them, that we may deem thoſe means their real effective cauſes. If ſight be given to one born blind, by touching his eyes, and commanding him to ſee; if a dead body, that has lain ſome days in the grave, and has already begun to corrupt, be reſtored to life, after a prayer to God, and the words, I ſay unto thee, ariſe: a miracle performed under ſuch circumſtances is a deciſive declaration of the Lord of nature in behalf of him who performs it. I cannot perceive, that this explanation leſſens the demonſtrability of miracles. So far as the effect is no way connected with the powers and means employed in producing it, or proportionate to them, and preſuppoſes a ſecret artful capacity in the ſcheme of the world, which can be employed or perceived by no one but the Creator and Ruler of the whole, the miracle is a proof of the hand of God, and particularly a valid credential for the performer, when he expreſsly announces himſelf as a meſſenger from God, performs the miracle itſelf in confirmation of the truth of his embaſſy and doctrines, and calls upon God in prayer to grant him the neceſſary power.

What Hartley advances as conjectural agrees, for the moſt part, with this notion of miracles. Amongſt the inſtrumental powers by which miracles may be produced he reckons ſuperior ſpirits, and influences from above, conſidering the whole ſpiritual world in ſuch a connection, that one part is an inſtrument to the

the perfection of the reſt, and that higher beings employ their greater and more extenſive faculties, to the divine purpoſes of promoting the happineſs of the lower orders. This view of the ſubject ſeems perfectly conſonant to the notions held out to us in the ſcriptures. According to it, miracles are but relatively ſupernatural, and not true and proper exceptions to the general ſcheme of God, according to which he governs the world, and effects his purpoſes in it. Thus it will be unneceſſary for us to conſider them as *immediate* acts of that omnipotence, to which God, if we may be permitted to ſpeak of him in ſuch human terms, muſt neceſſarily have recourſe, were there, in his grand ſcheme of providence and government of the world, no natural ſecondary cauſes, that could be employed to effect the purpoſes intended by thoſe miracles. We may ſay, then, with Bonnet, that God has pre-ordained every thing by one ſole act of his will, that there is only one ſingle miracle, which comprizes the immeaſurable ſeries of things that we term uſual and ordinary, and the much ſmaller number of thoſe that we ſtyle extraordinary, and that this incomprehenſible miracle is the creation.

Which ever of the given explanations of miracles, that exclude from the idea of them the immediate interpoſition of God, be admitted, it appears to me, that the ground for the demonſtrability of miracles, conſidered as immediate effects of God's omnipotence, uſually derived from the moral attributes of God, loſes nothing of its force. God, ſome will ſay, would, in a great meaſure, renounce the privilege of being the moral governor of the world, and render it impoſſible for him ever to give mankind a more immediate inſtruction, or an extraordinary illumination of the mind, if he permitted, in behalf of an impoſtor, and for the confirmation of lies, effects ſo unuſual, and contrary to the common courſe of things,

things, that the human underſtanding could not aſcribe them to their proximate cauſes, nor to any means it could diſcover, but muſt refer them to an inviſible power and inſcrutable wiſdom. In that caſe, the ſole criterion* by which men could diſtinguiſh the divine nature of ſuch appearances would be ſuſpicious, nay totally inconcluſive. We can as little determine, from our own experience, and the teſtimony of our ſenſes, whether miracles adduced in ſupport of a divine miſſion be, beſides what is abovementioned, the immediate act of God, or not, as we can ſolve the queſtion, whether there be any truly natural powers; for inſtance, whether gravitation be properly a power of God, or a power of nature, or whether the occurrences which we term

* When I ſpeak of miracles as the only certain criterion of an immediate revelation from God, I conſider them as including prophecies. For that a man ſhould truly and clearly foretel future events, dependent on unknown circumſtances, and deducible from the exiſting ſources of information by no human ſcience or cunning, is not leſs a miracle, than any other occurrence that departs from the ordinary courſe of nature. The Jewiſh Rabbies diſtinguiſh the promulgation of the law, on which they ground the divine authority of their revelation, from miracles, which, in their opinion, are no ſufficient proofs of a miſſion from God. But this diſtinction is frivolous and unfounded. The public delivery of their law proves the divine authority of Moſes and his mandates, only if conſidered as a miracle. That this miracle happened publicly was an accidental circumſtance, by no means altering or deſtroying its extraordinary and miraculous nature. If it were not a true miracle, it was no more than a mere human performance, and probably a well-intended impoſture of the law-giver, who was deſirous of giving his code the ſtamp of divine authority. With equal reaſon, it ſeems to me, might we chriſtians ſay, that we ground not the divinity of our religion on miracles, but on the reſurrection of Jeſus; as this, if ſufficiently proved, renders the allegation of all other miracles in defence of chriſtianity in a certain degree ſuperfluous. But to this it may be objected: if the reſurrection be not a miracle, it proves nothing. The ſame anſwer may be made to the Jews: what the promulgation of their law proves, it muſt prove as a miracle; and if it be no miracle, it proves nothing.

natural

natural be not on every occaſion immediate effects of God's power. Experience gives us no information whether God act mediately, or immediately, either in miraculous or ordinary caſes. All that experience and obſervation tells us is, whether the occurrence which we ſee be ſimilar to other experiences and analogies or not; and all our reaſoning, which is never certain or ſecure, in judging of the powers of nature, when it overſteps the bounds of experience and obſervation, is equally unable to inform us what thoſe powers are capable of performing, in new combinations, and by ſecret properties. Thus it appears, we muſt adhere to theſe indeterminate characteriſtics of miracles, that they are unuſual and extraordinary; that the phyſical cauſes and means in the performer's power, and which he employs, are not adequate to the effect; and that they are diſplayed expreſsly in confirmation of a divine miſſion, and to enforce ſuch doctrines and precepts as are worthy of God, according to our rational ideas of him and his attributes; conſiſtent with the relation in which he ſtands to his intelligent creatures, as their Creator, Governor, and Father; adequate to the wants, wiſhes, and expectations of thoſe creatures, and indiſpenſable to their attaining the ſummit of their happineſs. Still more certain will theſe diſtinguiſhing marks of the divine origin of a ſyſtem be, if it be demonſtrable, that the precepts given to men in a miraculous manner are not only of the utmoſt importance to their happineſs and virtue, but ſuch as without this inſtruction they could never have diſcovered, or at leaſt not ſo ſpeedily, univerſally, and with ſufficient certainty and perfection. As ſuch a divine miracle ſhould be ſtrikingly diſtinguiſhable from illuſions, and tricks of legerdemain, I would conſider it as a neceſſary characteriſtic, in this point of view, that the miracle be in itſelf important, particularly as to its good effects, and alſo firm and laſting.

laſting. The juggler can perform things by dexterity and ſlight of hand, which will aſtoniſh beholders, eſpecially of the ignorant multitude. Even the attentive obſerver, however well acquainted with the works of nature, is not always able to diſcover the ſecret. But theſe performances of art produce only an empty ſpectacle, and an object of ſurpriſe, never any uſeful or durable effect; whence we may ſuſpect them of deceit, though we cannot detect the artifice. The miracles which the ſcriptures record of Jeſus and his apoſtles are not liable to this ſuſpicion, as they were directed to good ends, and produced laſting effects. When a blind man was reſtored to ſight, by ſuch a miracle, it was not for a moment, but for his whole life. I make no objection to thoſe who, amongſt the characteriſtics of a divine miracle, reckon a certain external ſeemlineſs, *decorum Dei*, whence it muſt have ſome worth, dignity, and importance, diſtinguiſhing it from the puerile and fottiſh miracles, feigned by the legends of ſuperſtition in the dark ages. The miracles related in the ſcriptures have all this value and decorum, and, a very few excepted, are not expoſed to the ſmalleſt ſhadow of objection on this head. Finally, it ſeems, that miracles ſhould be employed very ſeldom, and only when indiſpenſably neceſſary to the attainment of the end propoſed. By frequent repetition, particularly as they were durable, they would loſe their aim, and in a great meaſure, if not wholly, fail of producing conviction. They ſhould prove to us, that the Lord of nature ſpeaks: but this they would do chiefly from being extraordinary and unuſual occurrences, ceaſing to do it if they were frequent, and the miraculous œconomy continual. If we ſuppoſe the frequently repeated miracles to happen in a certain order diſcoverable by the human underſtanding, we muſt compare them with ſuch natural phænomena as we cannot yet explain from their

analogy

analogy and agreement with our other experiences and obſervations: but we ſhould by no means be juſtified in relinquiſhing the hope, that we ſhould ſome time or other be able to do this, or that they might be reckoned in the courſe of nature by future inquirers, after more experiments and obſervations. If, however, they happened frequently, but ſo irregularly as to be reducible to no order, they would probably not enlighten, but perplex our underſtanding. We ſhould then be unable to determine what was natural, and ſupernatural, or unnatural: for our judgment in this reſpect is ultimately founded on experience. We can neither diſcover *a priori* the actions of bodies, nor the laws by which they act. Were there not an univerſal uninterrupted uniformity in theſe actions and their laws, but ſometimes one action, at others its oppoſite, took place under the ſame circumſtances; and if, having deduced a certain law of action from a number of caſes, we found this law did not apply to many caſes perfectly reſembling them; our preſumption of a conſequence ſimilar to thoſe of our former obſervations would be highly uncertain. Whatever were our foreſight, we muſt ever remain doubtful, whether what we had conceived to be a law of nature actually took place, or whether it were a law of nature, or not. Let us ſuppoſe, that the menace affixed to ſome unlawful marriages in the Moſaic diſpenſation, *they ſhall die without children*, is ſo to be underſtood, that the fruitfulneſs of unlawful marriages would be prevented by a conſtant miracle; in this caſe we could not diſtinguiſh the natural from the miraculous, and ſhould be led to conjecture, that, probably, the cauſe of this conſtant unfruitfulneſs depended on phyſical principles unknown to us. Were the miraculous cures which the people attribute to ſympathy, and ſo confidently expect in fevers, wounds, and other maladies, placed beyond a doubt, and fully proved to a natural philoſopher by inconteſtible

teſtible experience, his former theory of the powers, laws, and actions of nature, muſt aſſuredly appear to him, ſuſpicious, imperfect, and defective. He would unqueſtionably enlarge his limited ideas of them, and confeſs, that many things were poſſible in nature, which he hitherto had not ſuppoſed, or had deemed abſurd and impoſſible. Numerous and continued miracles would place us all in a ſimilar ſituation: not only would our underſtanding be perplexed, and our knowledge rendered uncertain thereby, but they would have a moſt pernicious influence on our conduct and activity. Deprived of analogy, the guide of our lives, we ſhould have no preponderating probability, that like effects would follow like labours and exertions; whence we ſhould have no ground or rule of conduct, and be deterred from all action, or raſhly yield to every fantaſtic hope, or romantic ſcheme. The extreme rarity of miracles ſeems to me proper, beneficial, and neceſſary, for another reaſon. They ſhould be nothing but the ſeal which God ſets on his inſtructions to mankind, as the ſtamp of their authenticity. Did they abound, they would too ſtrongly excite the curioſity of the many, draw their chief attention, which ſhould be occupied in examining and meditating on the truth to be believed, too much to the ſigns, and produce an inordinate deſire of miracles, inimical to the reception of truth. Beſides, men would leave the proper demonſtrations of truth out of the queſtion, and not ſeek to diſcover its connection, but, accuſtomed to theſe extraneous proofs, would require a particular miracle for every precept. How much true earneſt meditation on religion would be hindered, and ſenſuality and ſuperſtition promoted thereby, muſt be obvious to every one. Were miracles ſo multiplied, revealed religion would probably become a kind of diplomatic ſtudy to the greater part of mankind, and the ſubſtance of it would remain uninveſtigated

veſtigated and unapplied. For as the diplomatiſt chiefly employs himſelf in examining marks, ſeals, and the like, thinking chriſtians would give themſelves up too much to the examination of the ſeals of their religion, at the expence of more uſeful and important occupations. I would compare miracles, therefore, with Herculean remedies, as they are called, in medicine, which properly timed, and in caſes of extreme neceſſity, produce the moſt ſalutary effects, but uſed frequently, and without occaſion, are highly dangerous and deſtructive.

If what has been advanced be juſt, the objection to religious miracles (and we find no reaſonable grounds for the admiſſion of any others) that they are contradictory to the laws of nature, and preſume an alteration in the decrees of God, is wholly inſignificant and unfounded. But it ſeems to me, that this objection may be removed, even if the preceding explanation be not admitted.

To another objection, which the celebrated Hume has made againſt miracles, or rather againſt their adequacy to eſtabliſh the authority of any thing announced, our author, in my opinion, has given an anſwer the moſt valid and weighty hitherto adduced againſt his manifeſt ſophiſms. Hume maintains, that, if miracles be contradictory to the general courſe of things, confirmed to us as ſteadfaſt and unalterable by the univerſal experience of all mankind, and all our notions and concluſions reſpecting actual occurrences muſt be grounded on this univerſal experience, no human teſtimony can be ſufficient to convince us, that this general courſe of nature has been interrupted in any particular inſtance. For human accounts and teſtimonies are not confirmed as true and certain by any ſuch conſtant experience: on the contrary, experience teaches us, that men, prone to belief in the marvellous, particularly in matters of religion, lie and deceive themſelves. He admits only a ſingle inſtance

inſtance in which a miracle can be ſufficiently confirmed. "No teſtimony is ſufficient to eſtabliſh a miracle, unleſs the teſtimony be of ſuch a kind, that its falſehood would be more miraculous, than the fact, which it endeavours to eſtabliſh: and even in that caſe, there is a mutual deſtruction of arguments, and the ſuperior only gives us an aſſurance ſuitable to that degree of force, which remains, after deducting the inferior."

This, with ſome limitation, might be granted him, without, perhaps, detracting from the credibility of the ſcripture miracles: and could we ſatisfy his demand, the higher and more over-ſtretched it is, the more ſtrongly would the credibility of thoſe miracles be proved. This our author actually performs, whilſt, true to his ſyſtem of neceſſity, he remarks, that, with reſpect to the human mind, its actions and movements follow certain laws as ſteadfaſt, a courſe of nature as unalterable, and an analogy as unfailing, as thoſe which take place in the corporeal world. He ſhews, though briefly, that, on the ſuppoſition of the teſtimonies in behalf of the goſpel miracles being falſe, as great a miracle, and as great a deviation from analogy, muſt have taken place in the moral world, as muſt have happened in the phyſical, ſuppoſing theſe teſtimonies to be true. Miracles in the phyſical world preſent us with new and unheard of occurrences, and an apparent connection of cauſes and effects, ſuch as we have never experienced, and cannot explain in the ſame way as all our other obſervations and knowledge of the courſe of things. In the moral world they exhibit to us new men, that perceive, think, and act in a manner which we could neither expect nor believe from our internal feelings, or from our conſtant and uniform experience of mankind.

Men ſo wonderful, ſo ſingular in their kind, muſt the firſt preachers of chriſtianity have been, had the miraculous

miraculous events, on which their doctrines and proceedings were founded, been purposely forged by them, or had their belief of them arisen from self-deception. In the first case they would have been impostors, but such impostors as the world never beheld. For when men practise deceit it is with a view to gain; but their deceptions led to their own detriment. Void of fear and hope, the usual incentives to human undertakings, they were led to frame their impositions neither by one, nor the other. They feared none of those things which impostors usually fear: they braved the opposition of a whole world stirred up against them, and the obstacles thrown in their way by artifice, industry, learning, power, and authority. Quite defenceless, they involuntarily encountered all these enemies, and went as sheep to the slaughter. But perhaps they figured to themselves the contest less arduous, and victory more easy? No: they did not flatter themselves with fallacious representations. This is clear from their own and their teacher's explanations on this head, and from the never flinching constancy with which, to the end of their lives, they endured the extremest troubles and persecutions, without expressing the least astonishment. Perhaps the dread of greater evils made them so patiently submit to the less? They that renounced life, with all its comforts and enjoyments, had no greater evil to fear in this world. If their imposture went so far as to teach and confirm a future state, which they themselves did not believe, they had as little to fear in it, as to hope. If however they believed in future rewards and punishments, they could consider the propagation of this belief by means of a grand wilful imposture, and vile blasphemous lies, at most as pardonable from the benevolence of their purpose, but by no means as a title to reward, and a duty of conscience. Marvellous would it have been, under such circumstances,

had they felt themſelves impelled to this impoſture by the fear of future puniſhment. Hence it is evident, that they had nothing to hope, unleſs the being conſidered as founders and heads of a poor perſecuted ſect, that muſt be as contemptible to them as they were in the eyes of the world, and on condition of being themſelves moſt eminently expoſed to the poverty, contempt, and perſecution attending it. And even this wretched hope, of being the chiefs of a proſcribed and deceived people, they could not, with any ſhadow of reaſon, in their totally deſerted and defenceleſs ſituation, entertain. If notwithſtanding it be ſuppoſed, that ambition, though diveſted of all intereſt and every view to pleaſure or comfort, was the true motive of their undertaking, it cannot but appear ſtrange, that this ſhould have entered into the heart of a ſingle individual. Even in this caſe ſuch individual would have aſſumed to himſelf excluſively the ſupremacy, in order to ſatisfy his ambition. But here we have at leaſt eleven competitors, each of whom, by ſimilar pretenſions, incroaches on the ambition of the reſt, makes their claim to be conſidered as diſcoverers queſtionable, and ſets inſupportable limits to their authority. Nay theſe men, who had ſacrificed every thing to their ambition and luſt of power, placed a twelfth by their ſide by lot, and, which is moſt extraordinary, bore without repining, that a young man, who had publicly been their perſecutor, ſhould, without their knowledge and aſſent, aſſociate himſelf with them, and pretend to like powers and prerogatives. They diſplayed no envy at the happy ſucceſs of his endeavours, or his increaſing fame, though it ſeemed to obſcure theirs: nay they permitted this new comer to attack their deareſt prejudice, oppoſe himſelf to them as one of the moſt eminent on a ſignal occaſion, and openly accuſe them of diſſimulation. Their deeds, it is true, were actually, or in appearance, ſo powerful and ſtriking, that they

they not unfrequently excited the utmoſt reverence in their beholders; but then, with a great appearance of modeſty and humility, they refuſed the honour and admiration themſelves, transferring it wholly to God, and their crucified maſter. Their own aſſertions, that they were free from all ambition and luſt of power, are perhaps of no weight: but when they promulgated an expreſs injunction of their teacher againſt thoſe paſſions, and a recommendation of humility, they obviouſly acted contrary to what is ſuppoſed to have been their inducement, and forgot the only purpoſe they could have had in carrying on their impoſture. Still their conduct is a ſettled contradiction to this purpoſe, and they could not have acted otherwiſe, had it been quite different. Had they this purpoſe, and had they continued to act in this manner, notwithſtanding they obviouſly failed of effecting it, it would be a miracle not to be explained.

An adroit and cunning impoſtor would play off his deceptions in private: he would endeavour to withdraw as much as poſſible from the obſervant eye every circumſtance that could tend to detect him: and were he not certain of his point, either truly or in imagination, he would not permit it to be brought to a teſt, which might eaſily diſcover him, or leave it to proofs, the validity of which every one might aſcertain. He would exert all the powers of his mind to conceal his ſecrets, on which the ſucceſs of his impoſture muſt depend, and to give a due conſiſtency to his impoſture itſelf. In this he would not ſuffer himſelf eaſily to be caught. In collateral circumſtances he would be rather ſparing, and exhibit his deceptions ſingly, as he could not adjuſt every occurrence, and his preceding and ſubſequent conduct, ſo naturally to his plan, but that they might awaken ſuſpicion. The oppoſite of all this appears in thoſe who bore teſtimony of Jeſus. Had they been im-

poſtors, they could have hit upon no ſcheme more improbable, than that of deceiving by pretended miracles. It did not depend on the extraordinary penetration of a few to diſcover their falſehood, but it was in the power of every one who had common underſtanding to do ſo, and were they not concerned in the plot, they muſt conſequently pronounce its doom. Still more, they unneceſſarily expoſed themſelves to the hazard of being detected, by promiſing to impart the gift of working miracles; actually imparting it, according to their own accounts; giving inſtructions for its proper uſe, and dehortations from the abuſe of it; and finally puniſhing thoſe who were guilty of ſuch abuſe. The more eaſy and inevitable the diſcovery of an impoſture under ſuch circumſtances, the leſs muſt they who went ſo far have feared it. And were it notwithſtanding undiſcovered, producing ſuch an important and durable change in the world as no true occurrence has ever yet effected, this would be the greateſt miracle.—But it was probably the imprudence of the pretended workers of miracles, that led them to appeal to the performance of them in proof of their miſſion; and their being believed was owing to the ſtill greater folly of the ſpectators. —But how is this extreme imprudence reconcileable with that cunning and caution diſplayed in the artful ſketch of their impoſture, which are ſuch, that we muſt ſuppoſe them capable of having forged the goſpel hiſtory, or falſified it to anſwer their purpoſe, without the leaſt trace of this forgery or falſification appearing, and ſo ſuitably and naturally adapting their ſubſequent conduct to the character they had once aſſumed, as to be deemed the moſt ſincere and open-hearted of mankind? If we do not allow them ſuch artfulneſs or badneſs of heart, as purpoſely to have forged or falſified the goſpel hiſtory, ſo far as it concerns themſelves, and the contradiction between their preceding and ſubſequent thoughts and conceptions;

tions; this change in their minds, ſuppoſing the miracles to which they aſcribe this change not to have happened, muſt be attributed to the immediate effect of a miracle on their brains.

If it be attempted to explain miracles by the lax term of fanaticiſm, and, to make this the eaſier, the meſſengers of Jeſus be conſidered at once as impoſtors and fanatics, they muſt have been deceived themſelves in thoſe points in which they attempted to deceive others. Thus their enthuſiaſm muſt have led them to believe the reſurrection of Jeſus, which was the grand theme of their diſcourſes, and the foundation of their whole ſyſtem, to be true. If this enthuſiaſm were not ſingular in its kind, and altogether miraculous, they muſt have turned the whole attention of their minds to that point, expected it ſo long, and figured it to themſelves ſo frequently and forcibly, that their heated imaginations at length impreſſed it on their minds as vividly as perception itſelf could have done. Thus enthuſiaſtic notions ariſe, and thus muſt their fanaticiſm have originated. But their account of the origin of their belief in the reſurrection of their maſter does not agree with this. They expected it ſo little, as they tell us, that they could not give credit to it. They doubted it in the higheſt degree; and it ſeemed as impoſſible to them as it ever can do to the preſent opponents of chriſtianity. If, under ſuch circumſtances, they believed it as fanatics, their fanaticiſm muſt have been a miracle. If it be ſaid that they forged their accounts, in order to avoid all objection and ſuſpicion of fanaticiſm, it muſt be granted, that they knew themſelves to be fanatics, and therefore ſought to guard againſt the diſadvantageous conjectures of others. This claſhes with the confident certainty each individual fanatic muſt have had of the truth of his imagination. They muſt have been conſcious, that the grounds, on which they were convinced

of the reſurrection of Jeſus, were inſufficient to convince others. Thus they muſt have had recourſe to the moſt deliberate forgeries, and artful inventions to make others believe what was clear and unqueſtionable to their enthuſiaſtic minds. They muſt have been fanatics and impoſtors in ſo high a degree, at the ſame time, as would include an impoſſibility. We can conceive that a man, who has imagined himſelf to have ſeen an apparition, and is ſo far a fanatic, when he relates the ſtory to another, whom he wiſhes to convince of its reality, may ſupply ſome conſiderable circumſtances, in order to give it the greater air of probability. Such a deception is not only conſiſtent with fanaticiſm, but even ſcarcely to be ſeparated from it. But had the diſciples of Jeſus imagined, that they had ſeen him after his reſurrection, and purpoſely feigned, that they had converſed with him after it, verbally and circumſtantially relating the converſation; when they tell how he removed their doubts, appeared to them in private and in public, ate with them, &c. ſuch fictions would have perfectly excluded fanaticiſm, and rendered it impoſſible, as fanaticiſm would not have admitted ſuch fictions: or we muſt ſuppoſe the extrmes of prudence and folly united in the ſame mind, on the ſame occaſion.

On a nearer examination of the caſe, we muſt wholly give up the ſuppoſition of fanaticiſm, unleſs we maintain, that they, who ſtole the dead body of a man from the grave, in order to give out, that he was riſen from the dead, could at the ſame time have believed his reſurrection, in their miſtaken imaginations. For as the apoſtles appeared publicly at Jeruſalem, with the witneſſes of the occurrence, a few weeks after it was ſaid to have happened, it is clear that the body of Jeſus was no longer to be found in the grave; as no one could have the ſtupid effrontery to maintain the reſurrection of a perſon,

perſon, in a place where the dead body was ſtill to be ſeen. What inconceivable ſtupidity could have prevented their powerful, reſpected, and cunning enemies, from carrying theſe ſhameleſs promulgators of lies to the grave, to their eternal confuſion? If, however, the grave were ſtill to be found, with the body no longer in it, there was no pretext for the enemies of Jeſus but this, to which they had recourſe, that his diſciples had ſtolen the body. Now let any one judge, whether there be in nature ſuch a character, as muſt be aſcribed to the eleven on this ſuppoſition. Let any one judge, whether a way of thinking, capable of producing ſuch an attempt, be compatible with that which the goſpel hiſtory attributes to them previous to this knaviſh impoſture, without a marvellous alteration, or rather a new formation of the mind. If it be ſaid, as I have already remarked, that this contradictory deſcription of themſelves was purpoſely and artfully contrived, to render their account of the reſurrection of Jeſus credible, and if it were not phyſically impoſſible for them to have executed this difficult and dangerous impoſture, let any one judge, whether the following contradictions be reconcileable. Renouncing their national prejudices imbibed in early youth, the religion of their forefathers, and their deareſt hopes, they muſt have choſen a man who had ſeduced and deceived them as their leader, made him their idol, and recommended him as an object of adoration and prayer, truſt and imitation, to their own countrymen, by whom he was crucified, and to the heathen, who knew nothing of him, but that he had died the death of a malefactor. This they muſt have done with a fixed reſolution, and mad deſign of ſacrificing and ſuffering every thing that men could ſacrifice or ſuffer: determining to carry their plan into execution by no uſual means, not by force, or learning, which they did not poſſeſs, not by cunning and

addreſs, flattering and gaining the paſſions, but by the moſt meek and patient endurance, and a bold and open avowal of what they maintained to be true, and yet knew to be not ſo. With all this they muſt have intended to make mankind tranquil in the conſciouſneſs of the divine benevolence here, and happy in a future ſtate, by promulgating the knowledge of the true God, and the worſhip that would be acceptable to him, and by recommending righteouſneſs, virtue, and charity. Were theſe their purpoſes, and that to which they ſo evidently laboured muſt aſſuredly have been their deſign, they muſt have been at the ſame time the moſt godly and the moſt ungodly, the moſt honeſt and moſt diſhoneſt, the moſt zealous promoters and moſt callous betrayers of truth and virtue, the warmeſt friends and the bittereſt enemies to mankind, the moſt cunning and moſt ſenſeleſs of all men. The moſt godly: for they dedicated themſelves wholly to the ſervice of God. Their truſt in him ſeems to have been unbounded, and the ſole buſineſs of their lives was to make men love and honour him. The moſt ungodly: for they were not aſhamed of carrying on the moſt deliberate impoſture before the face of a juſt and all-ſeeing God. They placed by his ſide a man, who, they were convinced, was either a mad enthuſiaſt, or a wicked impoſtor. The moſt honeſt: for they demeaned themſelves with ſuch open-heartedneſs, impartiality, and want of ſelfiſhneſs, as were incapable of reproach. The moſt diſhoneſt: as they conducted themſelves thus irreproachably only to aſſiſt their impoſture, and ſtamp credit on their lies. Promoters of truth and virtue: as religious and moral truth are infinitely indebted to their labours, both with reſpect to theory and practice. They gave inſtructions ſo far above the general knowledge of their time, that, judged according to this, they appeared the fruits of madneſs: but the ripened and improved underſtanding of later

later ages vindicated the honour of their precepts, and a purer philoſophy adopted them. They ſupported their well-defined, pure, and rational doctrines of morality, by motives the moſt weighty, and moſt adequate to our nature. They aſſured the penitent ſinner of, what he muſt wiſh, yet durſt not confidently hope for, the grace of God, and a full pardon. Thus they excited in him gratitude to God, and made that powerful motive of the human heart an incentive to virtue. But when they aſſured him of this pardon, they by no means led him to a ſecurity void of fear. They ſeem to have been too well acquainted with human nature, to truſt to gratitude alone as a ſufficient motive to a virtuous conduct. They knew, that, in the preſent imperfect ſtate of man, fear is indiſpenſably neceſſary to impel him to his duty. Hence they repreſented the forgiveneſs of God, with all its happy conſequences, and preſent enjoyments, as a benefit to be acquired by means of the greateſt humility, moſt painful ſufferings, and magnanimous ſacrifice of a perſon above all meaſure exalted, innocent, virtuous, and benevolent. From the greatneſs and importance of the offering, whereby the ſinful and unhappy world was to be freed from miſery, and the dominion of vice, they led us to eſtimate the extreme perniciouſneſs of ſin, and the magnitude of the divine diſpleaſure. Thus to incite us to good, they united fear with love; preached, as, according to their own account, it was delivered to them by their Maſter, the forgiveneſs of ſins in his name, but not without repentance; pointing out to us a God from whom this forgiveneſs was to come, that we might fear him. The doctrine of a benefactor and ſaviour of mankind, who offered himſelf up for them, was applied by them in other ways to the advantage of virtue. They deſcribe him to us as the prince of ſalvation, gone before us, and made perfect by God through his ſufferings. They hold him

him up to us as a pattern, that we might conſider our ſufferings as neceſſary to our perfection. By his going before us we are excited to embrace theſe neceſſary and wholeſome ſufferings; by his example we are taught how to bear them; and by his victory we are filled with the hope of overcoming all the difficulties of our toilſome career, and even the terrors of death. Finally, by announcing the fate of this great and exalted perſon, they give us the cleareſt proof of a future ſtate; and aſſure all who ſuffer with him, that with him they ſhall be raiſed to glory. It muſt at leaſt be confeſſed, that ſuch a plan requires no ſmall knowledge of human nature in its inventors; that every thing in it conduces to the moral improvement and perfection of mankind; and that every wiſe and virtuous philanthropiſt muſt wiſh it to be true. Yet they who held this out to the world were nevertheleſs traitors to the cauſe of truth and virtue. They built the moſt important truths upon lies, and expoſed them to the moſt imminent hazard of being rejected together with theſe. They were traitors to virtue: for they made belief in an impoſtor the moſt important, and, as it ſeems, the excluſive principle of acceptable virtue; a mean of the forgiveneſs of ſins; and a neceſſary condition to that confident hope in a future ſtate, which was to give men the courage to be virtuous. They held up as a pattern of virtue the character, morals, life, and death of a man abandoned and rejected by God. They made all the conſolation of ſuffering innocence, and all the hope of ſtruggling virtue, depend on the life, power, and authority of one who was dead. They endeavoured to deter the raſh and hardy ſinner from vice, by the fear of a man, who had announced himſelf as the judge of the living and the dead, and had promiſed, that he would riſe again, as a proof of his being ſo. They were the warmeſt friends to mankind: for they

they undertook to make men virtuous, contented, and happy in God, without the leaſt ſelf-intereſt, againſt all probability, and at the expence of ſuffering the greateſt evils. They preached a religion, the ſtricteſt command of which was charity, the pureſt, ſincereſt, and moſt extenſive charity; which ſtrongly enjoined compaſſion, forbearance, patience, and forgiveneſs; and which was evidently the moſt benevolent ever publiſhed to the world. Still theſe preachers of love were the bittereſt enemies to their fellow-creatures. For, not to mention that the indemnification and recompenſe which they promiſed their deluded followers, for the ſacrifices they were to make, and the evils they muſt inevitably ſuffer, were chimerical, and founded on a non-entity; in order to propagate their lies, they were guilty of the vileſt miſdeeds, were diſturbers of the public peace, inſtigators of men againſt each other, calumniators of their innocent countrymen, rebels againſt lawful authority, and infamous inſurgents againſt the eſtabliſhed government of their country. They were moſt cunning: as they invented, in ſupport of their impoſture, every thing that could tend to make it credible. But this impoſture itſelf, the ſtealing out of his grave a dead man, a malefactor execrated by his own people, and then giving it out, that he had riſen, was the moſt ſenſeleſs and abſurd that it is poſſible to conceive.

Though perhaps I have ſaid the leaſt, and probably far from the moſt important, of what might be offered on the ſubject,* and the moral miracle muſt appear

* I remember ſome years ago to have read an excellent article on this ſubject, in the Gottingen *Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen*. The reviewer of an Engliſh anſwer to Hume's Eſſay on Miracles, not only commended the method here employed, as the beſt and moſt concluſive againſt that ſceptic's objections, but gave a comprehenſive though brief expoſition of the arguments. I regret,

appear ſtill greater if we conſider the reception, effect, and conſequences of the miſſion of Jeſus; ſtill it may ſuffice to ſhew, that, however prone men may be to deceive themſelves on every occaſion, and particularly in religion, and to give way to enthuſiaſm, ſtill they do not deceive in ſuch a manner as the apoſtles muſt have done, and are not ſuch fanatics as they muſt have been, had the miracles they relate, and particularly the reſurrection of their Maſter, been falſe. If they were impoſtors and fanatics, it muſt have been the immediate effect of a miracle wrought on their minds: as, on that ſuppoſition, their conduct betrays ſuch a deviation from moral order, and ſuch a violation of the laws of the intellect, as muſt be deemed a miracle. Whether this miracle be greater, or leſs, than thoſe which are offered in confirmation of chriſtianity, it is not eaſy to determine: but this does not require a very nice inveſtigation. Were the two kinds of miracles equally unuſual, extraordinary, and anomalous, nay, did the moral one appear leaſt ſo, ſtill the moral miracle in this caſe muſt appear infinitely more improbable to the candid

gret, that I have not the journal at hand, to extract a paſſage ſo important to my purpoſe. I was much pleaſed with it at the time; but I can recollect only what was ſaid of the traitor Judas. This, if I miſtake not, it is ſaid, is the moſt important witneſs, not only that the miracles of Jeſus actually happened, but alſo, that there was no impoſture in the caſe. He carried the purſe, and, as money is indiſpenſably neceſſary to an impoſture, muſt have known the deceit from the firſt. He had conceived a grudge, and, as it appears, a ſuſpicion againſt Jeſus, probably for noticing his diſhoneſty; and determined to betray him. He did betray him. But when he ſaw that Jeſus was condemned to death, he accuſed himſelf in the judgment hall of having betrayed innocent blood, returned the money in extreme deſpair, acknowledged that he was the greateſt villain in the world, and hanged himſelf. He muſt have been perſuaded, that the miracles of Jeſus were true: and if he, to whoſe exculpation it was ſo eſſential to find Jeſus guilty of impoſture, could accuſe him of none, it was impoſſible for him to have been an impoſtor.

deiſt

deiſt than the phyſical. The purpoſe of the latter is conſonant to the attributes of God, worthy of the Creator, Father, and Governor of mankind, and beneficial to the human ſpecies. The moral miracle, on the contrary (whether we aſcribe it to the immediate operation of the Almighty, to preordained phyſical laws, or to the influence of ſome demon let looſe for the deluſion and perdition of mankind) exhibits to us a Deity, at the diſcovery of whom we muſt ſhudder—a Deity, who delights in bewildering man's underſtanding, afflicting his mind with irremoveable doubts, placing inſurmountable obſtacles in the courſe himſelf has marked out for him, and engaging him in a moſt perilous conflict. And this fearful affliction would be more eſpecially the lot of the worthy few, who reflect on their deſtination; and the reward of thoſe honeſt minds, who diligently ſeek the truth, to raiſe themſelves to an exalted benevolence, and a ſimilitude with God. They, on the contrary, who value not the truth, the multitude of mere machines who never reflect, would vegetate in peaceful ignorance, and happy ſtupidity, freed from the rack of doubt. If the conſideration of the divine perfections, and a miracle anſwerable to them, performed in confirmation of a rational religion, in a caſe where we muſt chooſe between ſuch a phyſical miracle and a moral one, do not incline us to the former, we muſt reject every notion of God, and his moral government, that is agreeable to right reaſon. If, after a careful examination of the doctrines and precepts of chriſtianity, an impartial inquiry into the character, way of thinking, opinions, and views of its firſt preachers, and an accurate inveſtigation of the way in which it was introduced into the world, propagated and maintained, a man be convinced, that they who taught it, and they who received it on their words, thought and acted naturally and rationally, on the

ſuppoſition

ſuppoſition of the miracles related being true, and on the contrary unnaturally, incomprehenſibly, and miraculouſly, on the ſuppoſition of their being falſe; and that man ſtill have any grounds for doubting whether chriſtianity be a divine inſtitution; we muſt confeſs, that to meditate on religion, and our relation towards God, is the moſt vain and unfortunate occupation of our mental faculties; and that, as ſuch meditations muſt lead us into doubt, tranquillity is only to be obtained by adopting popular ſuperſtition, or abjuring thought. From what has been ſaid it appears how and why the overſtrained requiſition of the Scottiſh philoſopher, namely, that to render the account of a miracle credible, it muſt be a greater miracle for it not to have happened, ought to be limited.

But are moral miracles conceivable?* With our author I ſuppoſe the affirmative, when I admit the human mind to be ſubject to an eſtabliſhed order, by which its changes are as firmly bound, as ſubſtance by the laws of motion. According to the

* No one who admits the poſſibility of phyſical miracles, can well doubt the poſſibility of moral ones. Whether ſuch ever happened, or whether it be probable that God would perform ſuch, is a different queſtion. Philoſophy ſeems to combat theſe miracles, or any forcible violation and change of the proper activity of the ſoul, on the ground, that the perſonal identity of the thinking ſubſtance which is acted upon would be thereby deſtroyed. The ſcriptures give us no inſtance of a miracle changing the character and way of thinking of a man immediately. When a miracle was requiſite to this purpoſe, a phyſical one was always employed, as in the converſion of Paul, for inſtance; and this was to prevent the neceſſity of a moral one. The remarkable paſſage in Exodus, xiii. 17. ſeems to prove, that God found it inconſiſtent with his wiſdom to perform moral miracles. It is true we muſt admit, on a certain notion of divine inſpiration, that God works proper pſychological miracles: but I will not attempt to decide, how far the objection to moral miracles is applicable to that inſpiration. A man might be inſpired by means of a pſychological miracle, without having his mind altered or amended, as was the caſe with Balaam.

doctrines

doctrines of neceſſity, all the perceptions and determinations of the mind are ſo connected, ſo dependant on each other, that the ſubſequent ſtate of the mind is always determinable from the preceding, and chance is entirely excluded. On this ſuppoſition we are juſtified in preſuming upon as firm an order in the moral as in the phyſical world, and deviations from it, or an apparent union of cauſes and effects contradicting all analogy and experience, are as much miracles, as ſimilar deviations from the analogy obſerved and admitted in the phyſical world. If, however, we deny neceſſity, and maintain the freedom of indifferency, we muſt admit no moral miracles, at leaſt in the manner required by Hume to eſtabliſh the truth of the miracles related in ſcripture. According to this ſyſtem, chance rules over the actions of the mind, though not over the phænomena of the corporeal world. Now where chance exiſts anomalous conſequences may and muſt follow, and new appearances muſt ariſe, which will not be more improbable than thoſe hitherto obſerved, or at leaſt cannot paſs for miracles, as we have nothing fixed, no courſe of nature, no analogy to be violated. We cannot on this ſyſtem determine, whether a certain mode of thinking or acting be natural, unnatural, or ſupernatural, in any individual character (if according to it there be any ſuch thing as a determinate character). According to this notion the mind and its actions may be compared to a caſe, out of which the letters to compoſe a book are taken blindfold. Whatever be the order into which the letters fall, I cannot ſay of the ſeries ariſing, after a certain number of attempts, that ſome are natural and probable, and others unnatural and miraculous: new and various combinations may, and indeed muſt, ever ariſe, and the only improbable ſeries would be one giving an intelligible and connected ſenſe, as ſuch would

would be contrary to the nature of chance. If we ſay of God, with Pope in his Univerſal Prayer, that he

Binding nature faſt in fate, left free the human will;

and underſtand it to ſignify that God has ſubjected the irrational and inanimate creation to fate, or a connection of cauſe and effect, and on the contrary has left the human mind free from all laws, and to the arbitrary guidance of a blind choice; the former cannot deviate from its laws, ſhew itſelf under a new form, or exhibit effects ariſing from no cauſe; but the human will may, from the freedom given it, run into the moſt irrational propenſities, and incomprehenſible determinations. In ſhort, we thus find in man no determinate certain character, no way of thinking, deſign, or plan, on which we can fix our eyes, or from which we can deduce any inferences with the leaſt appearance of probability. If theſe conſequences of the ſyſtem of the freedom of indifferency, or chance, be juſtly drawn, its partiſans, if they be true to their ſyſtem, muſt find it difficult, if not impoſſible, to admit any human teſtimony as ſufficient to ſupport the credibility of a miracle. For how could they overcome the objection, that, as it is poſſible for the witneſſes to have been deceived, and to have advanced falſehoods, in an irrational and incomprehenſible manner, this was probably the caſe? Now as ſuch witneſſes are moſt important and indiſpenſable to the logical demonſtration of the truth of chriſtianity, it is clear, from this conſideration, that the ſyſtem of neceſſity, which muſt be tacitly admitted, if we would eſtabliſh their validity and credibility, cannot be dangerous or detrimental to the chriſtian religion. So little is it either, that it gives the due force and validity to the moſt rational arguments for its truth.

But are we as capable of remarking a deviation from

from moral, as from phyſical order? Is our judgment as certain in the former caſe, as in the latter? Theſe difficulties may be objected, though we admit what has hitherto been advanced. To me every thing ſeems to be alike in both caſes, except that more underſtanding, ſkill, attention, and reflection, are neceſſary to judge of a pſychological or moral miracle, than to the diſcovery of a phyſical one; at leaſt if it be ſo public, firm, and void of all juggle, or *deceptio viſus*, as the miracles in the goſpel. If theſe greater requiſites to the diſcovery of a moral miracle render the point more difficult, ſtill it will not be leſs certain, if they be properly applied. Probably the judgment may be ſtill more certain, if it be true, as it appears to me, that philoſophy is farther advanced in the knowledge of the human mind, its faculties, powers and actions, than in the knowledge of nature and its powers; has made greater and more important diſcoveries in the moral, than in the phyſical world; and is more perfectly and accurately acquainted with the changes produced in our minds, than with any thing elſe. Some philoſophers, it is true, will maintain the contrary; but the reaſon is, that in their inquiries into ſo near and intereſting an object, they are deſirous of tracing every thing to its primary ſource, without conſidering how much leſs of the nature of ſubſtance we are capable of diſcovering by an equally deep and ardent inveſtigation. I will not preſume to ſay, that there are no unexplored regions in the moral world, or nothing left for future inquirers into the human mind to diſcover; but I do not believe that we are ſo ignorant of the powers and actions of the mind, as to be unable to decide whether a certain mode of conduct be natural, or unnatural, ſuitable to its nature, or contradictory to it. In my opinion, what we know of the ſubject, and what we are capable of knowing from conſtant experience, and from an

attentive obſervation of men's characters, way of thinking, propenſities and manners, will be found ſufficient for this purpoſe. I believe, indeed, that we can more certainly judge whether a given mode of conduct, or ſeries of actions, in a given ſituation, and under given circumſtances, be natural to a given character, or to the human mind in general, and conſequently to be expected, or not; than, from our knowledge of the phyſical world, we can determine what is poſſible, or impoſſible in it. The firſt obſervers of human nature ſeem to me to have known what is requiſite to the former; and what the reſearches of ſubſequent ages have added to their knowledge ſerves rather, I think, to the gratification of curioſity, and the enlargement of the bounds of ſpeculative philoſophy, than to the benefit of real life, or the improvement of the art of bending man to our purpoſes. It appears to me of ſome weight, that later diſcoveries have by no means ſhewn the knowledge of human nature, delivered to us in the writings of its firſt obſervers, to be ſo imperfect, or erroneous, as the phyſical notions of the ſame ages. They muſt have been capable, therefore, of more fully examining, and more eaſily and juſtly viewing the moral, than the phyſical world. Conſider what Ariſtotle has written on the faculties and actions of the human mind: his logic perfect at the firſt attempt; his moral and political writings; are they not ſtill the ſubject of our admiration, and the rule of our taſte? And are they not uſed as helps to our knowledge of man, and all the arts and ſciences dependant on it? Though the characters of Bruyere are more diſtinct and finiſhed than thoſe of Theophraſtus, the latter is not leſs true and juſt in his moral delineations: and where ſhall we find a modern hiſtorian better acquainted with the human heart than Tacitus, or who ſcrutinizes it with more depth of penetration?

Thus

Thus it ſeems, that we have a ſufficient knowledge of mankind, to examine the probability or improbability of an account of human actions, and to judge whether moral analogy be obſerved, or violated in it. Our inquiry will go to this, whether the men deſcribed actually felt, thought, and acted, as we ourſelves ſhould have done in ſimilar circumſtances, or not. Though the leaſt learned and philoſophical are not deſtitute of this knowledge, they alone who have ſome knowledge of the world can exerciſe it readily, and with certainty. Every thinking and attentive reader remarks deviations of this kind, and always with unwillingneſs and diſſatisfaction. They deſtroy the illuſion and intereſt we feel, far more than violations of phyſical order. It is much more unpleaſant to us, to perceive an inexplicable contradiction in a character, an unfounded want of connection in a proceeding, or a pſychological and moral miracle, than exceptions from the laws of the natural world, or phyſical miracles. The fabuliſt may give his Proteus what wonderful forms he pleaſes, now change him into water, and then into fire; ſtill we forgive him whilſt he remains true to the character he has adopted. The magician may with his wand change the moſt frightful deſert into a beautiful garden, or a pile of rough ſtones into an elegant palace, and act as an uncontroulable lord of nature. But if the poet preſent us with men whoſe perceptions, thoughts, and reſolves are unconnected, unfounded, ineffectual, and tending to no end; if he introduce on the ſtage devils or angels in human form, without accommodating the ſcene to the characters, by giving them ſuitable employment, or placing them in ſituations to juſtify ſuch bold fictions, ſo as to avoid a violation of moral analogy; he would urge our credulity to the utmoſt. Even were the laws of nature moſt ſtrictly obſerved, ſuch miracles would diſguſt us, and appear too improbable to be

intereſting. The traveller may relate to us natural phænomena and occurrences never before heard of, yet, if we have no other reaſon to miſtruſt his veracity, we ſhall not eaſily reject, without examination, what he advances; and this on juſt grounds. But if he tell us, that he has met with men, who, with the ſame ſenſations as we poſſeſs of good and evil, hate their benefactors, and love thoſe who injure them, and who ſeek not to eſcape death, though extremely attached to life, we immediately condemn him as a liar.

This at leaſt ſhews an almoſt univerſal, juſt, and acute ſenſibility to every thing that agrees with moral order, or analogy, or is repugnant to it; and an equally general averſion to conſider any deviation from it as probable, or to be for a moment deceived into a belief of it. This goes ſo far, that we diſapprove, and reject as improbable, all caricatures of moral beauty and uglineſs, if not naturally ariſing from ſituation. And yet theſe are not properly deviations from the fundamental laws of mind. Theſe laws require connected conceptions, and exertions of the faculties of perception and deſire founded on each other. This combination is demonſtrated by conſtant experience. It is diſcoverable, though not ſo readily, in madneſs, frenzy, and fanaticiſm. The laws of mind are but apparently violated in the madman. Still we find in him a pſychological and moral order, though to perceive it requires the penetrating eye of a Cervantes, a Shakeſpeare, or a Richardſon. Whence comes it, that the fools, madmen, and fanatics of theſe followers of nature intereſt us ſo agreeably? It is becauſe in all their apparent deviations they remain true to moral analogy. They ſpin the thread throughout as they began it; without cutting it, and tying together ends never deſigned to meet. Their work is all of a piece; and they carefully guard againſt repreſenting the human mind to us as an inſtrument

inſtrument from which various hands produce unconnected tones. Such inſtruments would perfectly reſemble the minds of the firſt preachers of chriſtianity, were we to reject the ſole ground on which the apparent contradiction, and inconſiſtency, of their characters, and conduct, are to be explained, and reconciled. If the miracles, which alone afford us a key to decipher the myſterious harmony, did not happen, their minds were not guided by any ſpirit from above, but were inſtruments in the hands of ſome fiends, who called from them diſcordant ſounds without any plan. If, on the contrary, thoſe miracles actually occurred, every thing is capable of an explanation, the moral or pſychological miracle vaniſhes, and the conduct of thoſe who bore teſtimony of Jeſus appears in the faireſt light, as natural, rational, and virtuous.

PROP. XLVIII. p. 199.

Of the Queſtion whether the greater Part of Men's Actions, generally conſidered, be rather good than bad; or the contrary.

THE queſtion here ſtarted by our author, whether men be upon an average moſt inclined to good, or bad, and whether the greater number of their actions be commendable or blame-worthy, has generally been conſidered as intereſting to curioſity merely; but in his hands it becomes important, as from its ſolution he deduces an argument in behalf of virtue. It is true, indeed, that he lays no great ſtreſs upon it, and we muſt own, that the tendency of virtue, or its good conſequences, conſtitutes the chief and almoſt only argument for purſuing it, as into this all others may ultimately be reſolved. What he infers, however, from the practice and opinion of

mankind may be admitted as a preliminary argument; and were there no other, it would have ſome weight if it be true, that the general practice and opinion of mankind give a decided preference to virtue; or if it be true, that the practice of mankind is, upon an average, more inclined to virtue than to vice. Some good grounds for this ſuppoſition are adduced by Hartley. Still the inquiry is intricate and difficult, for this reaſon, that men are not agreed on what is here to be underſtood by good and bad, and in meaſuring them employ different ſtandards. The chriſtian religion teaches us to endeavour after the attainment of ſuch perfection, and places before us ſuch a pattern of virtue, that, if we compare the actions and general practice of mankind with this perfection and pattern, deeming nothing good but what comes up to them, and ſtyling every thing that falls ſhort of them vicious or bad, we cannot deny, that men are more vicious than virtuous, and that their practice is rather bad than good. But if we form our judgment of men's actions from this point of view, a number of them, which do not here come into conſideration, and which we may deem neutral, muſt not be taken into our calculation. Such are all actions in themſelves lawful and good, that is conſonant to the ends and purpoſes of our Creator, requiſite and neceſſary to the avoidance of phyſical evil and the attainment of phyſical good, but which cannot with propriety be ſtyled chriſtian good works, not being performed on account of the law, and the exerciſe of them being unattended with ſuch difficulties as render them properly objects of reward. Such actions are thoſe which even the moſt vicious man would rather do than thoſe of an oppoſite nature, or than thoſe which may be conſidered as properly vicious. According to our common mode of expreſſion, theſe may rather be termed good than bad, though they can be reckoned neither as the good works

works of a chriſtian, nor the virtuous actions of philoſophy. Moral philoſophy, purified and perfected by chriſtianity, would, in my opinion, produce ſuch a pattern and rule of virtue, that the morals and actions of the majority of mankind would, on compariſon therewith, appear rather bad than good. But if we take a lower ſtandard of virtue and goodneſs than what revelation holds out, and apply this to the moral conduct of men, rather conſidering their conſtant behaviour in their common occupations, ſocial employments, and endeavours to ſupport themſelves and families, and the uniform courſe of their domeſtic life, than certain conſpicuous actions occaſioned by rare circumſtances or occurrences, I am perſuaded, that we may juſtly maintain the actions of the greater part of mankind to be rather beneficial than injurious, and, upon the whole, attended with more good than bad conſequences. Some good thoughts on this ſubject may be found in an eſſay by Dr. Jortin, in the firſt volume of the Theological Magazine, that well deſerves to be read. He obſerves, that the calculation of a man's good and bad actions muſt be taken from the general courſe of his private life, and his conduct towards his relations and domeſtics, and he will then be found commonly to perform far more acts of compaſſion, benevolence, and gratitude, than of cruelty, envy, ingratitude, and malice.

The picture that Hartley draws of mankind in general ſeems to me to be perfectly juſt. Every man has actually within him the ſeeds of every virtue, and of every vice, and the proportion in which they thrive and ripen depends, in general, upon the ſituations in which he has been and is placed.

Circumſtances may occur forcibly to prevent the ſeeds of ſocial virtue from unfolding, and proportionably to ſtrengthen thoſe of ſelfiſhneſs and malevolence; ſuch are thoſe extraordinary occurrences

which firſt excite men to vicious actions, and which, if they continue any time, induce ſuch a facility in thoſe actions, that the mind, depraved by them, ſeems to poſſeſs a diſintereſted love of vice, and to practiſe it for its own ſake. Let us ſuppoſe a ſociety of men in ſuch urgent want, and ſo preſſed by the greateſt long-continued diſtreſs, that each of them not only cannot aſſiſt the reſt, but rather muſt be injurious to them, and that each is unable to ſupport himſelf but at the expence and ruin of the others: let us ſuppoſe, that this extreme of miſery, and the peril continually before their eyes, renders each anxious for himſelf alone, and draws all his attention to the ſupport of himſelf, whilſt his whole ſoul is occupied by a continued ſenſation of pain; the neceſſary conſequence of ſuch a ſituation would be, that all compaſſion, all ſympathetic and benevolent ſentiments, would be gradually weakened, and at length totally deſtroyed. On the other hand, inſenſibility, hard-heartedneſs, envy, and cruelty, in ſuch extraordinary circumſtances, becoming the means of ſupport, and ſo far reſembling virtues, would almoſt irreſiſtibly gain the upper hand. I remember to have read an account of ſome Engliſhmen, expoſed for a time to extreme miſery and want in the wilds of America: the minds and conduct of theſe, according to the relation of one of the unfortunate ſufferers, wholly agreed with and confirm what I have juſt been ſaying. Envy and malevolence were the predominant ſentiments of theſe men towards each other, each looking upon the reſt as his enemies.

There are circumſtances on the other hand, and theſe are the moſt common ſituations of human life, in which a man may and muſt ſerve others, if he would ſerve himſelf. Any civil ſociety, but tolerably good, is thus far preferable to a ſavage ſtate, that in general, and in moſt caſes, it connects the ſupport and welfare of one with the maintenance and weal

weal of the whole. The celebrated Rouſſeau, when he exalted the ſtate of nature ſo far above ſocial life, left this point entirely out of the queſtion, and, conſidering his ſubject ſolely on that ſide which favoured his bold aſſertion, placed in the ſtrongeſt light all thoſe circumſtances in which civil ſociety occaſions a variance and colliſion of intereſts betwixt its members, and ſo far gives birth to bad and injurious actions. With equal care did he guard againſt diſplaying thoſe circumſtances and occurrences in ſocial life which tend to the promotion of beneficence, good-will, and compaſſion. It is obvious, however, that in this ſtate ſentiments of benevolence are far more promoted and diſplayed, than thoſe of malice. How much, for example, are wrath and revenge moderated and reſtrained in civil ſociety! In the ſtate of nature we may preſume that occaſions of injury, wrath, and revenge, will leſs frequently occur, as the ſavage has fewer wants than the member of a civilized community: but then, as he has proportionally fewer means of ſatisfying his wants (unleſs with Rouſſeau we rate much too high the natural powers of the ſavage to ſupply his neceſſities, and the proviſion ſpontaneouſly afforded him for this purpoſe by the unlaboured earth) the caſe will nearly be reduced to an equality on both ſides. But the great difference lies here; the wrath of the ſavage rages implacably, and his revenge, whilſt he conſiders only his future ſecurity, will not eaſily terminate but with the deſtruction of his enemy. This is the reaſon why anger, and implacable revenge, are eſteemed exalted virtues by all ſavage nations, and are in general prized by people in proportion as we find amongſt them more or leſs traces of barbariſm. Civil ſociety, on the contrary, moderates and ſets bounds to anger and revenge, by holding out, and, in proportion as it approaches perfection, actually procuring to the injured party a reparation for his damage,

damage, and the injuſtice done him, rendering the avenging himſelf in many caſes unneceſſary, and even hazardous, and taking from him the trouble of ſecuring himſelf from future injuries by exerciſing it. Herein alſo we have the teſtimony of experience, that the more perfect the ſtate of ſociety, that is the more impartially, ſtrictly, and ſpeedily juſtice is adminiſtered in it, the leſs implacable revenge, and the fewer violent inſtances of it occur. It is true, that the moſt perfect civil ſociety cannot wholly remove all oppoſition and colliſion of intereſts betwixt its members, though it may reconcile the benefit of individuals with the good of the whole. Theſe are imperfections probably inſeparable from its nature. In this reſpect, however, civil ſociety may unqueſtionably be carried to a far higher degree of perfection, than it has ever yet attained in any community hitherto exiſting. To a wiſe and benevolent ſovereign, who ſincerely wiſhes the improvement of mankind, no object can be of greater importance, than to remove all ſuch variance and oppoſition of intereſts, or to render the caſes as few as poſſible in which we may procure advantages to ourſelves, without at the ſame time our endeavours promoting the good of others, or of the community; ſtill fewer ſhould thoſe be in which we cannot benefit ourſelves, but at the expence of others, or of the whole. Such are the caſes in which moſt men give way to ſelfiſhneſs and vice.

The occurrences of domeſtic life, in which man is principally to be conſidered, if we would judge of his character and conduct, are far more favourable to the promotion of ſocial inclinations, and the practice of virtue, than to the production and exerciſe of vice and wickedneſs. At leaſt, in civil ſociety, and in domeſtic life, man has far more opportunities for good than for bad actions.

PROP.

PROP. LIV. p. 238.

Whether there be Evangelical Counſels.

THE manner in which our author handles the doctrines of morality ſeems to be very natural, and at the ſame time contributes to the perſpicuity of his propoſitions. It alſo affords him an opportunity of placing in a proper light many things important in morals, that are uſually paſſed over as of little moment. The doctrine of pleaſures and pains delivered in the former part of this work conſtitutes the ground-work of his moral ſyſtem, whilſt he delivers rules for our conduct with reſpect to them. To underſtand this rule of life then, it is neceſſary that we ſhould not loſe ſight of that doctrine.

As the attainment of thoſe pleaſures, and the avoidance of thoſe pains, are the ſcope of our deſires, and the object of our endeavours, and, as morality is properly the rule of happineſs, it muſt teach us how to conduct ourſelves ſo as to obtain as much as poſſible of the former, and eſcape as much as poſſible of the latter. Human happineſs ariſes from the ſatisfaction of our deſires and inclinations, and is occaſioned by the pleaſures anſwering to them. It is highly uſeful to analyſe this into thoſe pleaſures of which it principally conſiſts, and hence to preſcribe ſuch regulations for our deſires, that they may not fail of their ends. To obtain happineſs and avoid miſery are unqueſtionably the firſt principles of morality. But theſe principles are far too general for practical application, and hence are inſufficient for our uſe. In practice, then, we muſt decompound them into ſubordinate principles. Here the diviſion of our author ſeems to be ſupremely excellent, as it wholly exhauſts the ſubject, and there is not a ſingle deſire

deſire or propenſity of the human mind which may not be conveniently referred to one or other of his ſeven primary claſſes. This diviſion has alſo the advantage of clearly and accurately ſhewing the value of our different endeavours, and what influence they may and muſt reciprocally have upon each other. Our duties are commonly divided into thoſe we owe to God, to our neighbours, and to ourſelves. With many advantages this diviſion of morals has alſo this diſadvantage, that, as many of our duties are of a compound nature, or may be conſidered at leaſt as equally duties to ourſelves and to our neighbours, we are frequently at a loſs under what head they may, with moſt propriety, be placed; hence we are led to divide things naturally connected, or to treat the ſame ſubject under two different points of view. The method here purſued removes this inconvenience. Another recommendation of it is, that thus our author was enabled to treat morality, as indeed it ought ever to be treated, as a regimen for the mind, or a rule of living for the preſervation of its health.

Good as our author's method is, and excellent as many of his notions and precepts are, ſtill I cannot deny that he appears not to have ſufficiently defined many things which deſerve a more narrow inquiry and explanation, whilſt he has evidently purſued others too far. Under the firſt head of the pleaſures of ſenſation he ſeems here and there to have introduced an unneceſſary and almoſt aſcetic ſtrictneſs, and a monkiſh morality. This ſevere morality, it is true, our author does not preſs upon all chriſtians, but, as he clearly expreſſes, on thoſe only who ſtrive to attain the ſummit of perfection. He ſuppoſes that the duties applied to this in the goſpel are particular duties, or, as they have been ſtyled, *conſilia evangelica*, that are not obligatory to all chriſtians. This principle is the ſource of his too ſtrict and over-refined morality. Hence abſtinence in eating and drinking,

drinking, when not neceſſary to preſerve the health of the body or mind, or in any other way mediately profitable, appears to him to be in itſelf ſomething devout, and approaching to perfection. Hence he ſpeaks of indulgence in meat and wine with ſuch an air of ſcrupuloſity; hence he recommends religious faſting; hence he ſpeaks ſomewhat unfavourably of marriage, which he conſiders as rather permitted than commanded, and beſtows the praiſe of peculiar ſanctity on a ſtate of celibacy. It muſt be owned, that he expreſſes himſelf here with his wonted prudence and caution, but the ground on which he proceeds is not ſolid, and is ſupported neither by reaſon nor ſcripture.

We have no proofs, that the moral ſyſtem of the goſpel contains any particular precepts for thoſe who endeavour after a higher degree of perfection, and ſuperior righteouſneſs, different from the duties which it preſcribes to all men. By theſe precepts, it is to be obſerved, are not underſtood exhortations to an heroic virtue, the exerciſe of which requires a concurrence of particular circumſtances with a rare and admirable frame of mind, as for inſtance to ſave the life of another at the riſk of our own, or to ſacrifice ourſelves for the good of our country. Theſe precepts are rather injunctions to extraordinary good works, that would be good works with reſpect to every man, and yet are not properly duties to all. They reſpect actions which every one may perform if he will. Such precepts we deny, on the principle, that they muſt be given by God, or by Jeſus Chriſt, and conſequently cannot be mere counſels, but muſt be laws. If we have a precept to do what is generally good, or what is requiſite to the greateſt happineſs, the general precept muſt be ſubordinate to the particular one. If Chriſt have given a *conſilium evangelicum* that would apply to all men, he has thereby explained what is beſt, and

that

that it is our duty to do: if, for example, Jeſus have counſelled all his diſciples, at all times, to live unmarried, and to give away their goods, he has thus declared, that it is in general the beſt ſo to do, and conſequently it is their duty. Men reſt themſelves upon ſome inſtances in which Jeſus has recommended a certain conduct that is too difficult, or indeed impracticable to ſome, and thence infer, that the precept is not obligatory to all, but a well-meant and ſalutary counſel for thoſe who will voluntarily follow it. Of this kind are the precepts which he gave his diſciples, if any one ſmote them upon the one cheek to turn to him the other, and if any one would take their cloak to give him their coat alſo. But it ſhould be conſidered, that this inſtruction of Chriſt was not a counſel which he gave to his apoſtles as particularly holy men, but it was a precept which their particular ſituation, the purpoſe of the buſineſs they had undertaken, and the manner of their being ſent out into the world, rendered prudent and neceſſary. Conſequently they were obligatory only on them, and on thoſe who may be in ſimilar ſituations. Their Lord told them, that he ſent them as ſheep to the wolves, or that in the execution of their office they would have the whole world againſt them, and would be expoſed defenceleſs to every violence and injury. In ſuch circumſtances, where reſiſtance would but make things worſe, where oppoſing force to force would produce no reparation of an injury, but only ſtimulate the powerful and irreſiſtible antagoniſt to freſh injuſtice and greater cruelty, and where oppreſſed innocence could lay no claim to the protection of the law, there would be no other reſource than extreme patience, mildneſs, and ſubmiſſion, to awaken the natural compaſſion of our enemies, and the feeble remains of humanity lying dormant in their breaſts. Nay more. Since, as was obviouſly the caſe, the grand

grand purpoſe of the miſſion of the apoſtles, namely, to preach and to propagate the goſpel, far from being promoted by the exerciſe of revenge, and an active reſiſtance to injuſtice, would be rendered abortive thereby, we cannot conſider theſe merely as prudential precepts of Chriſt, but as indiſpenſable commands: yet not for ſuch whoſe circumſtances would not like theirs be bettered by ſuch an extreme ſubmiſſion, but rendered worſe by it; not for thoſe who can ſhelter themſelves from violence and ſecure themſelves from injuries under the protection of the laws: not for thoſe who have not, like the apoſtles, a new ſyſtem to eſtabliſh, the ſucceſs of which muſt depend on the meekly ſuffering every injuſtice. To follow ſuch precepts, given to the apoſtles ſolely, and founded on their peculiar ſituation, in circumſtances totally different, would be abſurd. In civil ſociety, where the rights and property of every citizen ſhould be maintained ſacred and inviolable, under the guardianſhip of impartial laws, it would be to eſtabliſh very great errors and prejudices, ſerving to ſtrengthen the hands of the wicked in violence and rapine. Hence it appears, that the notion of thoſe, who, from this wiſe precept of Jeſus to his firſt diſciples, would deduce a general evangelical counſel for the righteous and moſt perfect of all ages, and the ſarcaſms of the evil-minded, who from this precept miſunderſtood make a ſtrong objection to the moral ſyſtem of Jeſus, are equally unfounded.

If we ſuppoſe that many of the precepts delivered by Jeſus in his ſermon on the mount, if not all of them, are merely evangelical counſels, this ſuppoſition will be contradictory to that ſaying of Chriſt, that the righteouſneſs of his diſciples muſt be greater than that of the ſcribes and phariſees. The command which Chriſt gave the rich young man, Matt. xix. 21. who came to him, and aſked what he muſt

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do to inherit eternal life, namely, ſell all that thou haſt, and come and follow me, is alſo conſidered as an evangelical counſel. The queſtion, to which this was the anſwer, was not what he ſhould do, to become more righteous and perfect than other men, but what he ſhould do to inherit eternal life. The teacher to whom he applied, and whom he thus acknowledged for a truly divine teacher, counſelled him not, but commanded him, to follow him, or to become his diſciple: and as this teacher certainly foreſaw that this young man would not be ſteadfaſt in his attendance on him, on account of his wealth and his too great attachment to it, but would be excited to fall away by the threatened and dreaded loſs of his goods, he commanded him voluntarily to part with his riches, that would otherwiſe be a ſnare to him. Jeſus ſaid to him, it is true: *if thou wilt be perfect:* but he did not here mean a greater degree of perfection, or righteouſneſs, than was neceſſary to him in order to inherit eternal life; he only directed him to do what would enable him to obtain and ſecure that righteouſneſs, and perfection, neceſſary to all the diſciples and followers of Jeſus. This is clear from what follows. When this young man, who thought the injunction too hard, went away ſorrowing, Jeſus ſaid to his diſciples: verily I ſay unto you, that a rich man ſhall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven: a ſentence that certainly would not have been uttered, had not the young man, by declining to obey Chriſt's injunction, excluded himſelf from the kingdom of heaven, and not merely from an extraordinary degree of righteouſneſs and perfection.

St. Paul's recommendation of celibacy, 1 Cor. vii. has alſo been deemed an evangelical counſel. That Chriſt likewiſe recommended it, as obſerved by our author, I can no where find: for the words, that till the time of his laſt coming men ſhould marry, and be given in marriage, cannot poſſibly be conſtrued as a miſpriſion

miſpriſion or undervaluing of that ſtate. They mean nothing more, than that, even at the time, ſo great a change of things would not be foreſeen, and conſequently, that men would be ſo little prepared for the cataſtrophe, as to remain in a ſtate of peaceful ſecurity, following their worldly occupations, eſtabliſhing new houſeholds, and forming matrimonial connections, which are uſually done in times of peace and ſecurity alone. Though Jeſus, on more than one occaſion, proclaims woe to thoſe who are with-child, and to thoſe who give ſuck, this can by no means be conſidered as a diſapprobation of matrimony. He laments the married only on account of their greater pains and trouble, to which they are more expoſed than thoſe who remain in a ſtate of celibacy. As to the counſel of St. Paul, it appears, as he ſays he gives it not as a commandment, and that every one may do as he will, but that it is better to remain unmarried, that this expreſſion has every thing requiſite to conſtitute an evangelical precept. It may with great probability be ſaid, that this is a precept of an extraordinary good work in all men who can and will conform to it, but that it is yet no duty. It may be obſerved, however, that the apoſtle explains it not as any ſuch extraordinary good work, and no where ſays, that he recommends celibacy on this account. It is rather clear, that he adviſes it merely on account of its convenience. It is with him merely the dictate of prudence. He ſays, he would that every one would remain unmarried, on account of the carefulneſs ariſing from marriage, and the pains and troubles to be expected, the burden of which is much more heavily felt by the married, than by the unmarried. If the circumſtances of thoſe times, when thoſe who were incumbered with a family had much ſeverer conſequences, and greater perſecutions to fear, were the grounds of this apoſtolical precept, it was not given to thoſe who live in

other times, and in different circumſtances. St. Paul had before given this general precept, that, to avoid fornication, every man ſhould have one wife: but to thoſe who had the gift of continence he gave this advice, that they ſhould remain unmarried, as thus they would have fewer troubles. But what is of moſt importance, St. Paul expreſsly ſays, that he, and not Chriſt, gives this counſel; and only to thoſe who were not in danger of being enticed to fornication. Beſides it can be no general rule, for were all men to follow it, the general happineſs muſt fall to the ground, and it would become a moſt urgent duty to marry. Our author endeavours to parry this objection, by premiſing, that, in expreſs precepts of the goſpel, we ought not to concern ourſelves what effect the general practice of them would have on the common happineſs of mankind, which depends ſo much on matrimony, and the propagation of the human race thence ariſing. Had we, indeed, expreſs and unequivocal precepts before us, we ought not, in putting them in practice, to look forward with caution to their poſſible conſequences. In that caſe we muſt ſuppoſe, that we did not conſider the ſubject in the right point of view, and might in ſome way or other be miſtaken. But this will not apply in the preſent inſtance, as celibacy is no where ſo expreſsly and undeniably enjoined in the moral precepts of the goſpel. We are rather to conſider, whether thoſe recommendations of it, which we find in the apoſtolical writings, be founded on the particular circumſtances of the perſons to whom, and the times when they were given, or be general rules equally valid to all men, at all times, and under all circumſtances. As long as this remains doubtful, the conſideration, how far the happineſs of mankind would be promoted in the one caſe or in the other is abſolutely requiſite to the deciſion. It is no ſufficient anſwer to the objection, that this precept, in the preſent

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fallen ſtate of mankind, as our author ſays, cannot be followed by all men, but only by a few, and hence its bad conſequences are not to be regarded. By this ſubterfuge, it ſeems to me, many evidently bad actions may be defended as innocent and virtuous. It is indiſputable, that an immediate good may be procured by ſeveral actions that are not to be permitted, as for inſtance, the killing a cheating gameſter, a ſeducer of youth, or a pimp in a duel. But why is this murder, notwithſtanding the immediate good conſequences which it produces, an unallowed and puniſhable deed? Morality anſwers, becauſe the permiſſion of ſuch actions, and the general practice of them, would deſtroy both public and private happineſs. In juſtification of it, however, we might ſay in like manner, that we need take no thought about the general practice of ſuch deeds as ſo many other conſiderations and circumſtances would reſtrain men from it. But to this we might apply the general maxim of morality, that every evil act, which would be injurious, were it generally permitted and practiſed, is forbidden to us. This maxim muſt alſo be admitted here, otherwiſe the ſame objection may be made to chriſtian morals, as Rouſſeau made to the modern French philoſophers, that, if their principles did not inſtigate men to perſecute and kill one another, they tended to prevent the propagation of the ſpecies.

Were this precept followed, ſays Hartley, it would be ſtill better for us, as the coming of the kingdom of righteouſneſs would thus be accelerated. If by the kingdom of righteouſneſs he underſtand the millennium as it is called, which the Revelation of St. John ſeems to promiſe, this is probably to be conſidered as a chimera founded on a miſtaken paſſage; at leaſt we are too little acquainted with that golden period, to dare to expect in it ſuch purity and holineſs of manners as will leave no room for marriage.

In a ſubſequent note we ſhall probably have occaſion to ſay more of this opinion of our author. If, however, he underſtand by it the end of the world or the laſt day, it is not eaſy to ſee on what our obligation is founded, or where we learn, that its coming may be haſtened by an extraordinary and apparently ſuper-human righteouſneſs.

Theſe are the principal inſtances and proofs of *conſilia evangelica* uſually adduced. It is obvious, however, that they are improperly ſo termed.

We ſhall now proceed to ſome other reſtrictions of our author, which we think too rigid and unneceſſary. If the rules which he preſcribes with reſpect to food be requiſite to preſerve health of body (and this, generally conſidered, they abſolutely appear to be) ſo far they deſerve to be followed. But if we abſtain from eating fleſh out of regard to animals, or compaſſion for them, or from ſome far-fetched notions deduced from the Old Teſtament, our right to the enjoyment of animal food ſeems to be unneceſſarily limited. Suppoſing that no expreſs permiſſion to eat fleſh was given to Noah and his deſcendants, they muſt have taken this liberty of themſelves, as they and animals became more numerous; and an action, without which they could not ſupport themſelves and multiply on the earth, could not be forbidden as ſinful. Savage and uncultivated nations, though not numerous, could not poſſibly ſubſiſt without the fleſh of animals, whilſt ignorant of agriculture, or, if acquainted with it, unable to purſue it from their inſecure and warlike way of life. The ſpontaneous fruits of the earth are too few, and the gathering them is too uncertain, and expoſed to too many dangers, for them to ſupply their ſole food. Hunting muſt be the moſt important occupation, and chief mode of ſubſiſtence, of all barbarous nations. Civilized people, however agriculture might flouriſh amongſt them, would not be half ſo numerous, were they

they deprived of animal food, as they now are whilſt that forms a part of their nouriſhment. Certain animals, that are a reſtraint on the increaſe of mankind, and which would conſume what is deſtined for their ſupport, muſt be killed by them and kept under, or they would want room upon the earth. Finally, we are aſſured by natural philoſophers, that the fleſh of animals is a neceſſary food for man, to enable him to execute and ſupport bodily or mental labours, that require a ſtrong and continued exertion of his faculties, without being extremely enfeebled and fatigued. Thus, as eating fleſh is on many accounts uſeful and neceſſary to man, it is impoſſible that his nature ſhould be rendered more perfect by abſtinence from it, or that in refuſing the enjoyment of animal food ſhould conſiſt a peculiar ſanctity. It is rather a ſelf-impoſed act of religion, ſuch as St. Paul expreſsly diſapproves, 1 Tim. iv. 3.

Equally too far appears the morality of our author to be carried with reſpect to the uſe of wine. He would have it employed as a medicine and a cordial, rather than as a common drink. Here alſo I muſt obſerve, that we ought to take into conſideration thoſe only of his arguments againſt the uſe of wine, which are deduced from the nature of that liquor, and its effects on the health of our bodies and minds. On the other hand, what he ſays againſt it from the alteration of the vegetable juices induced by the flood, and particularly from the vow of the Nazarites to abſtain from wine, appears to me to be inconcluſive, and of no weight. Whatever may have been the nature of the vow of the Nazarites, we are by no means authorized, from their abjuring the uſe of wine, to conclude, that abſtinence from it is a ſtep towards higher perfection. We might with equal juſtice infer, that cutting off the hair would be an obſtacle to our attaining perfection; for againſt this alſo the Nazarites made a vow.

Both theſe were moſt probably only tokens of mourning, as a man generally took this vow when about to undertake a long journey, and abſent himſelf for a time from his native country.

The praiſe beſtowed by our author on religious faſting belongs alſo to the monkiſh ſyſtem of morality, notwithſtanding there are many amongſt the proteſtants, who conſider it as an exerciſe of devotion. As I have much to ſay againſt this, let me firſt obſerve, that I ſpeak not of ſuch temperance and ſobriety as tends moſt effectually to remove diſorders of the body, induced by an improvident and immoderate indulgence in eating and drinking, and are thus neceſſary to give our minds the freedom and activity requiſite to the due exerciſe of prayer, meditation, and other acts of devotion. As far as faſting, or rather moderation in diet, is conducive to theſe purpoſes, it deſerves to be ſtrongly recommended. But faſting has no merit as an act of devotion, conſidered by itſelf, or as an action immediatel acceptable to God. Can that being who is all benevolence and love take pleaſure in a man's voluntarily chaſtening his body, without his command, and thinking to honour his Creator by puniſhing himſelf? Can it be acceptable to God for man thus to endeavour to do more than he is commanded, and thence to take merit to himſelf? The notion of an intrinſic and immediate excellence in religious faſting, is altogether grounded on ſuch unjuſt and unworthy ideas of God, that it is ſcarcely worth while to ſay any thing farther againſt it. They who through ignorance and prejudice fancy themſelves honouring God by puniſhing their bodies, can at moſt expect only forgiveneſs, but their faſts can by no means be conſidered as truly good works. If, however, faſting be only valued as an immediate inſtrument of promoting inward devotion, exciting and ſtrengthening piety, and fortifying virtue, in particular chaſtity,

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as it appears to be by our author, it is an abſolute duty to thoſe who are ſenſible of theſe advantages of it, as far as is actually ſubſervient to thoſe purpoſes: but to this no ſtrict faſting is requiſite, or an abſtinence from all food for a whole day. Such faſting, far from promoting its deſigned ends, would in many reſpects be highly detrimental to them. Strict and frequent faſting is prejudicial to health, and in conſequence of it ſuch unpleaſant ſenſations commonly ariſe at our ſtated periods of eating as render us unfit for any thing, eſpecially for acts of devotion. To weaken the deſires of youth by faſting requires ſuch an extraordinary degree of it, as would tend greatly to injure health. The body muſt be conſiderably exhauſted and weakened by the deprivation of nutritious juices. If this be not done, faſting, employed for this purpoſe, may produce directly oppoſite effects. For the purpoſe being fixed in our minds, our whole attention would be turned to it; and experience teaches us how lively this attention is capable of rendering certain ideas, even when we call in all our mental faculties to ſuppreſs them. Long faſting, practiſed for a courſe of years, may alſo imperceptibly and gradually weaken us, and occaſion a waſting of the body, whence we may grow old before our time, and bring upon ourſelves a premature death.

Let us, however, inquire what the ſcriptures ſay of faſting. The ordinances of religion enjoined the Iſraelites in the Old Teſtament were very ſtrict: yet we find, that they had but one faſt day appointed them in the whole year. This was the great day of atonement, on which they were to mourn, and appear as ſinners. Were faſting ſuch a neceſſary act of religion as it is deemed by ſome, it would in all probability have been oftener preſcribed the Jews: for one day in the year is almoſt equivalent to none. The other holydays and ſabbaths of that people were,

as is well known, days of feasting and joy. In later times, the Israelites, willing to do more in respect to fasting than God had commanded them, established other fast days. But on this head God declared by his prophet Isaiah, chap. lviii. 6, 7. that the fasts acceptable to him were when a man reduced himself to want by the restoration of goods unrighteously obtained, or when he abated somewhat of his usual proportion of food to assist those who were more poor and necessitous than himself, and to prevent the hungry and needy from perishing. Here no fasts are spoken of for which particular days were set apart, but such as a benevolent and compassionate man would exercise whenever he saw another oppressed by want. In the New Testament we find a remarkable observation of Christ on fasting, Matt. ix. 14. whence it appears, that the Pharisees, and the disciples of John fasted, but the disciples of Jesus fasted not. Christ said, that his disciples were to be considered as children of the bride chamber whilst he was with them, and consequently, that their fasting then would be as improper as fasting at the celebration of a nuptial ceremony: but, as fasting was a mark of sorrow and mourning, they would fast, when he was taken from them, and they mourned his absence. The meaning of his words is; when a man is sorrowful, and cannot eat for grief he may fast; but if he have not this reason for fasting, it is unnecessary for him thus to chasten himself. Instances of exemplary persons who have fasted have been adduced from the Acts of the Apostles, xiii. 2. 1 Cor. vii. 7. as proofs of the necessity of religious fasting. But it is not our duty to fast because Paul fasted; for Paul performed many other acts of devotion which it is not incumbent on us to imitate. Thus he took the Nazarites' vow, and permitted Timothy to be circumcised. Both these he did in compliance with the customs of the Jews, and

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was juſtified by the particular circumſtances in which he ſtood. To us, however, the whole of the Levitical law is annulled, and were we to do what Paul did in circumſtances totally different, we ſhould not be equally excuſable. Beſides, he ſays expreſsly, 1 Cor. vii. 6. that he gives not a commandment, but a permiſſion. Chriſt himſelf has no where preſcribed faſting. In a paſſage often cited, 1 Cor. ix. 25, 27. faſting properly ſo called is not ſpoken of, but merely an abſtinence from certain meats, the indulging in which was deemed ſinful, to avoid giving offence to the weaker brethren.

I admit, however, that there are a few obſcure paſſages in the New Teſtament, which may be adduced in favour of the propriety, if not of the neceſſity of religious faſting. Of theſe are the words of Chriſt, Matt. xvii. 21. "this kind goeth not out but by prayer and faſting:" ſpoken of the caſting a devil out of a lunatic youth. The diſciples of our Lord had been unable to caſt him out, and on their aſking Jeſus the reaſon of this, he aſſigns the want of faith as the general cauſe, but alſo adds, that devils of this kind were not to be caſt out but by faſting and prayer. Jeſus, however, caſt out this devil without prayer or faſting, but merely by rebuking him: thus faſting and prayer were neceſſary only for his diſciples, probably as being neceſſary to excite and fortify that faith which was neceſſary to the performance of that miracle. The whole paſſage, however, is very obſcure, and I know of no commentator who has hitherto explained it ſufficiently. Still thus much is clear, that, at moſt, faſting is here recommended as a mean to effect a miracle, and produce a faith capable of working it, and conſequently cannot be required of thoſe who have no power to work miracles. When Chriſt, and the apoſtle Paul, occaſionally give ſome rules for the obſervance of faſts, and how they might be better performed

performed than was commonly done, we may preſume that theſe religious ceremonies, like others then practiſed by the people amongſt whom they were, and which were not poſitively to be rejected, were rather permitted than enjoined, and that what is ſaid relates only to ſome open abuſes of them.

The monachal and aſcetic opinion of our author reſpecting celibacy ſtill deſerves to be examined. He ſeems to conjecture, that whilſt man remained in paradiſe in a ſtate of innocence, the human race was propagated in a manner different from what it now is. This conjecture, however, which was entertained by the convulſionaries, and other fanatics, has no foundation in the nature or frame of man, or in the Moſaic account of his origin. Moſes relates the appointment of marriage, the increaſe of the human ſpecies to be effected by it, and the bleſſing given by God to the firſt pair, before he mentions the fall of man. But this fall, however important and extenſive we may ſuppoſe its conſequences to have been, could not have occaſioned ſuch an alteration in the eſſential frame of man, as to produce in him parts which he had not previous to it, or to change the functions of thoſe which he had. Before man had expoſed himſelf to moral depravity, his natural inclinations, no doubt, were more moderate, more obedient to reaſon, and more ſubſervient to the ends for which they were implanted: but it is not credible, that they were altogether wanting, and that the innocent pleaſure attending a due ſatisfaction of them was denied; neither have we the leaſt foundation for ſuch a ſuppoſition. Analogy, from the conſideration of animals in nature reſembling man, teaches us the contrary. Theſe, which never fell, would unqueſtionably have been propagated in the paradiſiacal ſtate as well as in the preſent. The immortality poſſeſſed by man in a ſtate of innocence could no more render the propagation of the ſpecies unneceſ-

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ſary, than that immortality promiſed us in a future ſtate, where we ſhall be liable to no decadency. Had that been the caſe, the Creator muſt have produced at once all the human race that were ever to inhabit the earth. This however, would not have been conſonant to that benevolent purpoſe which Paul holds out to our notice, namely, that all men are of one blood, that by the manner of their origin and propagation they might all be connected together, and be brothers and ſiſters.

PROP. LIX. p. 253.

On the Lawfulneſs of ſtudying the Polite Arts.

THE ſentence of our author on the polite arts, that they are ſcarcely to be allowed, except when employed to religious purpoſes, ſeems to be carried too far, at leaſt if it be his meaning, that theſe arts are to be reprobated, unleſs immediately dedicated to religion. How many inſtructive, uſeful, and edifying works of taſte muſt then vaniſh! The didactic poems of philoſophy, the inſtructive fables of an Æſop, hiſtorical pictures, deſcriptions of the works of nature, landſcapes, and gay, animating and pleaſing muſic, muſt all fall together. Such an unreaſonable and ſevere judgment, however, I cannot aſcribe to our author. Muſt he not have conſidered that a man could not dedicate his talents to religion with any ſucceſs, unleſs he had previouſly exerciſed them on lighter ſubjects? and that it would be neceſſary for him to read and ſtudy the beſt works of the ancients and moderns, few of which are confined to religion, in order to form his mind, obtain a juſt, nice, and ſolid taſte, and acquire a capacity of expreſſing himſelf properly, clearly, accurately, ſmoothly and nobly? Muſt he not have known how the ſtudy

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of the polite arts increaſes our knowledge of the human heart, and unlocks the paſſages to its moſt ſecret receſſes? And how neceſſary, or at leaſt uſeful it is, to enter the road to philoſophy through the gate of the fine arts? Finally, muſt he not have reflected, that to underſtand and excel in ſacred poetry, a man muſt be no ſtranger to the other kinds of it, or to its ſiſter arts? I will rather ſuppoſe that, as it frequently happens with the zealous, led away by his juſt indignation againſt the immoral abuſes of the polite arts, of which the beſt heads have been too frequently guilty, he has expreſſed himſelf ſomewhat too looſely and incautiouſly. I am far from defending againſt him the cauſe of dilettanti, who, by their labours in the polite arts, excite irreligious levity, recommend to us the ſatisfaction of our ſenſual deſires as our ſupreme good, and the great end of our exiſtence, and pourtray the pleaſures of love and debauchery with a too ſeducing pencil. Still I cannot perſuade myſelf that all images of theſe pleaſures are abſolutely immoral and unallowable: rather, in my opinion, muſt they be conſidered as permiſſible, whilſt the pleaſures of the ſenſes are painted only in ſuch a degree and manner as they are innocent, and ennobled by being allied to moral purpoſes; and in ſuch colours only as pleaſe the imagination, and exalt the moral ſenſe, without ſeducing the heart. I muſt confeſs, that a good compoſition, under ſuch reſtraints, would be no eaſy work, as the fear of being immoral would be too liable to occaſion a deficiency of intereſt; and on the other hand, to avoid leaving the heart cold and unmoved, morality might be ſacrificed to the deſire of giving delight. Extreme circumſpection, therefore, muſt be recommended to the young artiſt, if he would not lay the foundations of repentance in his more ſerious and riper age. I ſay, to the young artiſt, as in general this doubtful employment of the fine arts may perhaps be pardonable

in

in the gayety of youth, as a preliminary to more uſeful and ſerious compoſitions: but it is highly improper at leaſt, to uſe no harſher term, when old men and gray-beards continue to dedicate their talents to Bacchus and Venus, and, with one foot in the grave, indulge in the frolicſomeneſs of youth. A gray-headed Anacreon amongſt chriſtians, however we may admire the heathen bard, is a ſtrange and ſhocking phænomenon.

PROP. LXVII. p. 280.

On the pure Love of God.

It appears, from the preceding propoſition, as well as from other parts of his work, that Hartley is a defender of the pure love of God, which ſo many have diſputed, and which moſt moraliſts have baniſhed to the kingdom of chimeras. He not only maintains its poſſibility, but holds it up, with its adjunct ſelf-annihilation, as the laſt point of perfection, and the ſummit of happineſs to all rational beings. That he may not be too precipitately condemned, and claſſed with thoſe enthuſiaſts, whoſe defences of the point he maintains have met with no favourable reception, it will be neceſſary to exhibit his explanation of the nature of ſelf-annihilation, and the pure love of God, and the manner in which they are produced. For this purpoſe I will endeavour to collect the ſcattered lights appearing here and there in his work, particularly in his theory of aſſociation. The following conſiderations include what he has ſaid of moſt importance on the ſubject, and are calculated to elucidate his ideas.

All our inclinations and exertions, as ſoon as we become conſcious of ſelf, begin with a view to this ſelf: and, indeed, whilſt we are merely ſenſitive, they ariſe

ariſe from a ſenſual ſelf-intereſt. When we have once received pleaſing and unpleaſing perceptions, from the impreſſions made by objects on our ſenſes, we deſire the return of the former, and dread the return of the latter. So long as we experience the pleaſures and pains of ſenſe alone, and, in conſequence of this experience, endeavour to reproduce or avoid them, it is ſenſual ſelf-intereſt merely that excites us to action. When by degrees we become acquainted with higher and nobler pleaſures, we in like manner deſire and ſeek a repetition of thoſe pleaſures; and then, as our author obſerves, we ſubſtitute a more refined ſelf-intereſt, inſtead of that merely ſenſual, with which we began. If, from all the pleaſures we have hitherto enjoyed, we collect a general idea of happineſs, without confining ourſelves to the deſire of one particular kind of pleaſure, and bend all our deſires and endeavours to this general happineſs, we act from a rational ſelf-intereſt. But ſelf-intereſt is ever the firſt motive of our exertions, inaſmuch as whatever we deſire, we firſt deſire with a view to ſelf, and as the means of ſelf-ſatisfaction. Our deſires and endeavours are ſelf-intereſted alſo, ſo far as they are founded on objects that are pleaſing and deſirable to us only through the medium of ſelf, by means of which we became acquainted with them. If, however, an object pleaſe us of itſelf, and for its own ſake, without the leaſt view of any ſatisfaction to be expected from it to ourſelves; and if it be no longer conſidered as the means of pleaſure, but the poſſeſſion or enjoyment of it be an immediate ſatisfaction to us; the deſire thence ariſing is, according to Hartley, diſintereſted, and the love of the object pure love. Experience proves, that we are capable of loving and deſiring in this diſintereſted manner. A very obvious and remarkable example of this is given by our author, with regard to the love of money, in the former part of his work, containing the hiſtory of

of aſſociation, which example we ſhall by and by make uſe of, to elucidate our ſubject. Unqueſtionably, too, there are ſtill more noble inſtances of diſintereſted love. From the foregoing definitions of ſelf-intereſt and diſintereſtedneſs, how can we deem the love an affectionate mother bears to a young, helpleſs, and ſick child, ſelf-intereſt, when to nurſe and watch over him ſhe forgets herſelf, regardleſs of her own eaſe, convenience, and health, nay frequently ſacrificing her life, and, if death free her from the toilſome taſk, mourning as if bereft of all the joys of life. Certain, however, it is, that this diſintereſted love could only have originated from conſiderations of ſelf, and that it was ſelfiſh before it was diſintereſted.

The laws of aſſociation explain how this remarkable converſion of ſelf-intereſted deſires and inclinations into diſintereſted ones is effected, in the following manner. When deſire is aſſociated for a ſufficient length of time with an object, by means of ſome pleaſure, or ſelf-ſatisfaction, which it procures, and the object, remaining the ſame, gives us various pleaſures, and affords us ſatisfaction in many different ways, the deſire is united with the object in ſuch a manner, that, after repeated aſſociations, the intervention of the idea of pleaſure, which firſt made the object deſirable, becomes leſs and leſs neceſſary to produce the deſire, in time ſuperfluous, and finally unheeded, ſo that in many caſes it is no longer perceived, or ſuppoſed, to be the medium which unites the deſire with the object. This may be explained by the diſintereſted love of money, which actually takes place in the miſer. The various advantages, benefits, and pleaſures, which he promiſed himſelf from the poſſeſſion of money, firſt make it pleaſing to him, and an object of deſire. The more he learns to know and value thoſe advantages, benefits, and pleaſures that gold can procure to its poſſeſſors, and the

the more he is convinced, that it is indiſpenſably neceſſary, and at the ſame time ſufficient to procure them, the more eagerly muſt he covet it, and the higher muſt he prize it. When he thinks of any advantage, ſatisfaction, or enjoyment, he thinks alſo of money, as the only mean of procuring him the object of his deſires, and as the exponent of all his pleaſures.

Theſe pleaſures are various, and the advantages which money will procure him are various, but the money conſtantly preſents itſelf to his mind at every view of them. The idea of money continually recurring, and thence becoming more forcible, weakens, obſcures, and at length ſuppreſſes thoſe ideas, and original deſires, from which the love of money itſelf aroſe. He now ceaſes to value gold as the means of obtaining other good, and his deſire is attached immediately to the gold itſelf: he loves it as a good, without any diſtinct view of the advantages it will procure him, and thus his ſelf-intereſted love of money is gradually converted into a diſintereſted one.

Juſt ſo is it in the before-mentioned caſe of a mother's diſintereſted love to her child. This love firſt ariſes from ſelfiſh conſiderations, and from various references to ſelf. The mother loves her child from conſidering him as a part of herſelf: ſhe values him on account of the pains, troubles and cares he has coſt her. The pleaſing proſpect of the gratitude and love with which he will one day repay her maternal affection, and the hope that he will be an honour to her, increaſe her inclination toward him. This inclination at length gains a prepollence over every other, as the accompliſhment of all her wiſhes and deſires can only be expected through this child, and ſhe can figure to herſelf no pleaſure into which the idea of her beloved child does not enter. Thus this conſtant idea ſuppreſſes every other, and occupies the whole of the mother's mind. When arrived at this point, ſhe

ſhe loves the child without reflecting on any ſelf-ſatisfaction, or rather a view to ſelf is no longer neceſſary to her love of her child. If he be torn from her, ſhe feels a fearful void in her heart; and fancies ſhe has loſt her all, as indeed he was all to her.

What has been ſaid will, I hope, prove ſufficient to give the reader a clear conception of the manner in which a ſelf-intereſted deſire is converted into a diſintereſted one. The whole depends on its being admitted as a fact, that when one idea compriſes in itſelf ſeveral others, accompanies each of them, and is frequently aſſociated with each as its cauſe, ſource, or effective means, that one idea gradually obſcures the others, and ultimately ſo far ſuppreſſes them, that we are no longer conſcious of their intervention, but immediately paſs to the ſingle one. To illuſtrate this, our author inſtances the high degree of ſelfiſhneſs of thoſe who have always found the pleaſure they hoped for and expected in the completion of their deſires. He ſuppoſes, that ſuch perſons firſt acquire this high degree of ſelfiſhneſs, or the pleaſure which they aſſociate with the accompliſhment of their wiſhes, and on the other hand the pain they feel when they are diſappointed, from their having always obtained the pleaſure they ſought when their wiſhes have been fulfilled. Thus the accompliſhment of their wiſhes has become aſſociated with every pleaſurable enjoyment. Firſt, it is agreeable to them only on account of the pleaſure it procures: but by degrees the chain that links them together is overlooked, and the ſatisfaction of their wiſhes becomes immediately pleaſing, and an indiſpenſable requiſite, without any view to the pleaſure it will procure. That this is actually the caſe, and that men who always find pleaſure in the accompliſhment of their wiſhes are eminently ſelfiſh, is evident from this, that nothing conduces ſo much to the cure of this vice, as the being convinced by repeated experience, that

the fulfilment of our desires will not afford us the pleasure we hope, but rather tend to make us unhappy.

This will serve in some measure to decide the dispute amongst philosophers, whether all our desires and inclinations be selfish, or there be some perfectly disinterested ones. In reality our desires must first be self-interested. If an object produce in us a pleasing, or unpleasing, sensation, we immediately desire its continuance and repetition in the former case, and its cessation and absence in the latter, for our own sakes: we value it only so far as it gives us pleasure. Thus the child's love to its mother is originally founded on the pleasing taste of the milk with which she nourishes it. On the other hand, an object is only so far odious to us, as it is the cause of unpleasing sensations. We love what has given us pleasure, on account of the enjoyment and pleasure we again expect from it: or our inclination is at first self-interested, and connected with self-satisfaction. If they who assert, that all the inclinations of human nature are self-interested, mean nothing more than this, they are perfectly right: but if they would maintain that this retrospect to self, this motive of our inclinations and endeavours after an object, derived from self-satisfaction, must always continue, and ever be present to the mind, they contradict all experience, and the most accurate observations of the human intellect. They err, if they deny that an object may gradually become immediately, and for its own sake, pleasing and desirable. We have seen that this may happen, and that in some instances it must necessarily be the case. This arrives in the same way as, according to the foregoing theory of association in general all original automatic motions are changed into voluntary ones, and these again into automatic ones of the second order. Thus all our desires are originally automatic, and arise from a bodily

bodily want, or appetite. When this want is ſatisfied, and this appetite appeaſed, a pleaſing ſenſation enſues. As ſoon as we become conſcious of this, we are no longer impelled to ſatisfy the appetite in the former involuntary manner, but from a deſire of the pleaſure we have experienced; and then we become ſelf-intereſted. When a certain object, however, has frequently given us pleaſure, it becomes immediately pleaſing to us, and the inclination to it again ſo far automatic, that it ariſes in us without the intervention of the idea of the pleaſure procured us. Thus when the object is deſired, loved, or ſought after, for its own ſake, a diſintereſted inclination, or pure love, takes place. This diſintereſted love a man may feel, not only for what is good, but for what is bad. In this caſe alſo, the inclination is changed from intereſted to diſintereſted gradually, and in the way we have related. To wiſh, or occaſion, ill to our fellow-creatures, merely for the ſake of doing them harm, is no original propenſity of our nature; and St. Auguſtin is greatly miſtaken, when he infers this from the envious looks twin brothers give each other. Their malice is no more diſintereſted, than that of two dogs gnawing the ſame bone. But experience ſufficiently evinces that malevolent inclinations may become diſintereſted, when a man has long accuſtomed himſelf to aſſociate his pleaſure and ſatisfaction with the miſcarriage of others, and his unhappineſs with their ſucceſs. Here, in like manner, the connecting link is unheeded; their unhappineſs is pleaſing to him, as their happineſs is painful, in itſelf, and for its own ſake, and a pure hatred, and diſintereſted envy, take root in his heart. The blood-thirſty Domitian was no more born with an original propenſity to murder than other men. But thinking himſelf no other way ſecure, and his perturbed fancy preſenting nothing to his mind but naked poniards, he was impelled to murder by fear

and ſuſpicion, like moſt of the Roman tyrants, as the means of ſelf-preſervation, till, by degrees, the ſhedding of blood became a pleaſing and deſirable object to him, without any view to the ſecurity for which it was firſt ſought. The groans of the unhappy wretches whom he ſacrificed to his jealouſy and ſuſpicion were grateful to his ears, and murder was ſo neceſſary an amuſement, that, when he wanted other victims, he diverted himſelf with killing flies.

It is now time that we apply this to the pure love of God. Our author explains its origin thus. God is the fountain of all good, and conſequently is aſſociated in our minds with every perception of it, that is, with every pleaſing ſenſation: hence it follows, that the idea of God, and of the ways by which his goodneſs and bliſs are revealed, ultimately ſuppreſſes and excludes every other, until, in the words of ſcripture, he becomes all in all.

An explanation of this ſhort ſentence, the expreſſion of which is ſomewhat lax, may not perhaps be diſagreeable to the reader. God is the fountain of all good. In this all true philoſophers agree with divines. But the ſenſe in which our author employs theſe words is ſomewhat more exalted and expreſſive, than that which they commonly bear. According to him, God is the fountain of all good, ſo that not only what we, with our confined knowledge of good and evil, at preſent deem ſo, but every occurrence, change, and action, that takes place in the ſpiritual world, muſt be referred to him as its author. God is, according to him, the ſole agent, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe. All created ſpirits, without exception, are but accompliſhers of his infinitely benevolent will, and inſtruments to fulfil his purpoſes, that extend to all eternity. A living knowledge of this perfect dependency of all beings on the firſt eſſence, in whom they live, and move, and have their being, by whoſe breath they are vivified, and by whoſe ſpirit they are animated,

animated, tends, in his opinion, moſt effectually to promote a conviction of the nothingneſs of ourſelves, and of all created beings, before God. But we do not properly acknowledge God as the fountain of all good, till we admit, when conſidering all his works and ordinances, what God himſelf ſaid at the creation, that all are good: and this, with him whoſe view is not confined to a ſingle point, like that of ſhort-ſighted man, but embraces all infinity, applies both to the preſent, and to eternity. Thus whatever God has ordained, or permitted, we muſt acknowledge to be good. That evil, which here diſtreſſes and perplexes us in various forms, would ceaſe to appear to us an evil, were our views enlarged, and its connections and effects laid open to our eyes. The mind, freed from its long illuſion, and perceiving all to be good, would be reſtored to the moſt perfect tranquillity, by the unexpected ſight. The way in which God leads his intelligent creatures to this happy knowledge, which now too frequently ſeems to us an endleſs labyrinth, would then appear the beſt and ſpeedieſt by which the goodneſs and bleſſedneſs of God could be revealed. Each knot that now ſhackles us would be unlooſed, every doubt and difficulty that now perplexes us would be removed: and in ſuch a manner, that we muſt acknowledge it worthy of the wiſdom and goodneſs of our Creator, and neceſſary and beneficial to ourſelves, that thoſe knots ſhould have been tied, and not ſooner looſed, and that thoſe doubts ſhould have perplexed us, without being removed at an earlier period. It is probable, that this joyful diſcovery, with the conviction of the univerſality of God's influence, would eminently and irreſiſtibly promote ſelf-annihilation, and the pure love of God. Did we merely diſcover, that every thing in general was good, and particularly ſo for ourſelves, without referring all to its only true ſource; did we make ourſelves partakers

in the honour due to God alone, or attribute a part of it to any other creature; we ſhould ſet up ourſelves, or this too highly exalted creature, as the rivals of God, and the idols of our hearts, which would be an obſtacle to the pure love of God and ſelf-annihilation. On the contrary, were we to perceive and think of nothing good, but in connection with God, and aſſociated with the idea of him; and were we to conceive of every thing preſented to our minds as his work, and as an inſtance and manifeſtation of his goodneſs; it ſeems to be an unavoidable conſequence, that the idea of God, and of the proofs of his goodneſs, muſt ſuppreſs and exclude every other. Every good thing is an emanation from his goodneſs: but theſe emanations are manifold and various. He, however, the living fountain of them, remains the ſame, and his idea is aſſociated with every thing that is good, beautiful, or excellent. Hence the connecting chain is overlooked, and God becomes immediately pleaſing to us, raviſhing us with a beauty, that unites in itſelf the ſplendour of all the various good and pleaſures for which we are indebted to him. Thus he becomes the immediate object of our ſatisfaction, deſire, and joy.

It requires no farther proof, that this conſequence muſt enſue, on the preceding ſuppoſition. We have taken an incontrovertible fact for the baſis of our argument, and from unqueſtionable experience may infer, that what regularly happens, on a ſlighter occaſion, muſt inevitably follow on an infinitely ſtronger, and under circumſtances far more favourable. If the miſer can ſay to a heap of gold, thou art my god: and this his god occupy his whole heart, though, notwithſtanding his experience of the great and extenſive utility of money, many oppoſite facts concur to prove that it is not always uſeful and indiſpenſable, and though he muſt have many aſſociations which tend to leſſen his affection for it, to counterbalance

counterbalance thoſe which knit his heart to it: muſt not the mind that ſees all its wants and wiſhes ſatisfied through God, and through him alone, and that can think of nothing worthy of its deſire, love, or admiration, without the idea of God being preſent with it, be penetrated with continual pleaſing perceptions iſſuing on all ſides from this only ſource? Muſt not this grand idea, recurring with every enjoyment, and abſorbing every excellence, become by degrees ſo intimately united with all its pleaſures, as to model all its powers and faculties?

The following obſervation will more clearly ſhew how fully we are juſtified, in this inſtance, in carrying our inference from the leſs to the greater. Experience teaches us that money, when once it becomes the immediate object of the miſer's deſire, is in a great meaſure uſeleſs to him; and, whilſt he fears the loſs of it too much to employ it for any purpoſe, it is incapable of procuring him thoſe advantages, conveniences, and pleaſures, for the ſake of which he firſt deſired wealth. His paſſion, when it becomes diſintereſted, will in a great meaſure, if not wholly, diſpenſe with what ſerved to nouriſh it, without the leaſt decay. Still, however, it is clear, that, could his riches procure him the enjoyment of thoſe pleaſures on account of which they were firſt prized and deſired by him, without any fear of the loſs or diminution of them, the conſtant enjoyment of them would cheriſh and fortify his paſſion. Now this will really be the caſe with the happy mind that is filled with the pure love of God: for, as new gratifications inceſſantly ariſe from the divine benevolence, its love will never want food, and conſequently the aſſociations by which that love was generated will be continually renewed, refreſhed, and ſtrengthened. The conſequence of this will be, that, to ſuch minds, God, as our author expreſſes it in the words of ſcripture, will be all in all. From

what has been ſaid his meaning is clear: namely, that God will be the ſupreme, ſole, and ſufficient good; that the idea of him will ſupply the place of every other pleaſing idea, and procure all the ſatisfaction which had hitherto been but imperfectly obtained by means of other objects, in an infinitely more ample degree. Whether this be actually the meaning of St. Paul, who makes uſe of this expreſſion 1 Cor. xv. 28. will admit of a doubt. Probably he employed it in a leſs extenſive ſenſe. Probably he meant nothing more, than that, after Chriſt had ſubjected all things, thus attaining the end of his office of mediator, and fulfilling the purpoſe of his delegated authority, every thing ſhould be put under the dominion of the Father, and thus God become the immediate ruler of the ſpiritual world. To this expoſition it may be objected, firſt, that through the ſubjection of all intelligent beings accompliſhed by Jeſus, which is obviouſly related as preparatory to the immediate dominion to be aſſumed by God, ſuch a perfection and exaltation of the creatures is to be underſtood as will render them fit and worthy to be immediately governed by God, and conſequently not requiring an intermediate ruler. Secondly, that a forcible ſubjection of refractory and unamended hearts, a ſubjection in which the power, not the goodneſs of the ſovereign would be diſplayed and experienced, cannot here be meant. Such a ſubjection and dominion, effected and exerciſed by power alone, is contradictory to the nature of the kingdom of Chriſt, who, as he himſelf declares, reigns through truth, over the hearts of willing ſubjects. Without that all men are ſubject to him, and it muſt be deemed a very defective explanation, to ſuppoſe this ſubjection to mean nothing more, than that Jeſus would bring his former enemies to a knowledge of his power. Would this render them more fit or worthy to be under

under the immediate dominion of God? Here the connection of the apoſtle's propoſition ſeems to fail. Moſt probably the paſſage in Philippians ii. 9—11. in which a ſimilar ſubjection is ſpoken of, muſt be conſidered as a parallel one. On this ſuppoſition, the ſenſe of the words, that God may be all in all, will be this, God will reign immediately, that is, the ſubjects which Jeſus Chriſt ſhall put under his dominion will be bleſſed by his immediate influence: he will be their ſupreme and only good, their all.

The queſtion that now remains to be anſwered is, when can man attain ſuch a pure love of God? Is he capable of it in this life? or only in a future ſtate? To this our author anſwers, and his anſwer is ſupported by experience, that, according to the preſent nature of man, and the ſtate of the world in which he lives, extremely few, if any, approach the borders of this pure love. Far the greater part of mankind ſuffer themſelves to be guided by the groſſeſt ſelf-intereſt, which leads them to deſire, and endeavour after, the pleaſures of ſenſation, of imagination, and of ambition alone. How ſmall the number of thoſe who acquire a taſte for the exalted pleaſures of ſympathy, theopathy, and the moral ſenſe; and who are capable of that refined ſelf-intereſt, which leads them to ſeek thoſe nobler pleaſures! Farther, how extremely few of theſe deem the pleaſures of the three latter claſſes ſo important as to bend their greateſt, if not their only endeavours, to the attainment of them, and to ſeek to procure them only from the impulſe of refined and rational ſelf-intereſt! But if a man ſacrifice theſe two kinds of ſelf-intereſt to the pure love of God, nothing muſt appear good and deſirable to him but as far as it is connected with the Deity. The idea of this moſt benevolent and bleſſed being muſt be united with every object of his wiſhes, and the perfect love of him muſt exclude all fear: for whilſt fear

fear is in the ſlighteſt degree aſſociated with the idea of God, the mind will be incapable of ſuffering him fully to reign in it. But we are prevented from attaining this perfect exemption from fear, by the inſuperable ſenſe of our own weakneſs, wants, and failings, from which, it is true, we are capable of freeing ourſelves more and more, though never entirely, if we employ, with unabating ardour, the means preſcribed by religion, for the improvement and confirmation of our faith, which will make it continually approach to the deſired ſtandard. To theſe means prayer particularly belongs, by which a lively idea of the inviſible God is kept preſent, and frequently recalled to our minds, and we are led to an attentive contemplation of his ways, his word, and his works, more eſpecially of thoſe which we ourſelves have experienced. Hence we acquire a diſpoſition to perceive God in all things, and to ſee and feel how kind and benevolent he is on every occaſion; and take pleaſure in loving moral good, and hating moral evil, for his ſake.

It is going a great way, when a man brings himſelf to this; even though conſiderations of ſelf-intereſt, a nobler and more refined ſelf-intereſt indeed, are intermingled with it. This ſeems to be the utmoſt height we can attain in this life. Indeed, from the frailty inherent in us, and the inſufficiency of our virtue, it may be perilous for us anxiouſly to ſtrive after greater purity, and aſpire to nothing leſs than a perfect delight in God unalloyed by fear. Such an attempt would be too apt to lead us into the errors of fanaticiſm. Here we ought to remark, that perfect ſelf-annihilation, and the pure love of God, are very wiſely conſidered by our author as a point which man can never attain, though he may continually approach it; like ſurd numbers, which we may continually approximate, though we can never exactly expreſs them. Eternity itſelf would be

be too ſhort for the ſpirits of the righteous to arrive at the end, or to attain a point from which they could proceed no further. But our author does not limit this progreſſion, or approximation to the pure love of God, to a few intelligent beings, or a ſingle kind: in his opinion, it is the common lot of all, without exception. It is obvious, that this muſt naturally follow, from his principles, and the doctrine of aſſociation. For if creatures, whoſe thoughts and wills are governed by the laws of aſſociation, be expoſed to the ſame impreſſions and experiences, for an indefinite time, their modes of thinking and willing muſt continually become more like each other, and it ſeems to be impoſſible, that the difference between them ſhould increaſe, or even remain the ſame. As the ſame nature is common to them all, ſimilar circumſtances muſt produce in all ſimilar effects. This cannot be denied, if we grant our author the following ſuppoſitions.

In the firſt place, he ſuppoſes, that, in the various ſcenes and viciſſitudes which men paſs through in this life, all the aſſociations by which they figured to themſelves as good what was detrimental, deſiring and taking pleaſure in it, as well as all thoſe by which they were led to ſhun as pernicious and hate what was good and deſirable, are corrected by means of experiences in ſome meaſure painful. Secondly, that the aſſociations which induce us to expect what is actually good from any created thing, and thus to attach our deſires and love to ſuch a thing, or to ſeek ſatisfaction and happineſs independent of God, are in the ſame manner disjoined and annihilated by unexpected and oppoſite conſequences. Thirdly, that new aſſociations more juſt, and more perfect, are formed, when our former pleaſures are unexpectedly united with their conſequent pains, and our former pains with their conſequent pleaſures. If theſe ſuppoſitions

poſitions be admitted, we are juſtified in drawing the following inferences.

Firſt, By following this better way we acquire knowledge, and a love of what is truly good, in the ſame manner as we were before made unwiſe and unhappy by falſe aſſociations.

Secondly, As all true good is united and concentred in God, we muſt ultimately know this, and fly to him in our ſearch after happineſs: and as we experience all good without him to be defective, unſtable, and inſufficient, we ſhall finally ſatiate in him our thirſt after true good, and after permanent and increaſing ſatisfaction. If we admit the laws of aſſociation, and ſuch a mechaniſm of the human mind as is conformable to it, this ſeems to be the natural progreſs of every rational being. It muſt be confeſſed, that, in every given point of this progreſs, conſidered ſeparately, we muſt admit a great difference with reſpect to the extent of the way that each has paſſed: but it cannot be denied, that every one approaches the ſame point, whether by a ſhorter, a longer, a ſtraighter, or a more indirect way. No true aberration, and ſtill leſs a retrogreſſion *in infinitum* can take place: every deviation is merely apparent, and happens only to remove ſome obſtacle. This, however, is ſo far valid only, as the operations of the mind are not diſturbed by the interpoſition of any ſuperior power, or as the being that ſtrives after perfection is not ſupernaturally and forcibly obſtructed or repelled in its progreſs.

It remains to be ſhewn, that this approximation to ſelf-annihilation, and the pure love of God, is alſo an approximation to the higheſt perfection and happineſs of rational beings. It is already clear, from what has been ſaid, that they muſt always be approaching this point, from the frame of their natures. We infer too, that what is a natural and inevitable conſequence of our nature, when we are placed in ſuitable

ſuitable circumſtances and a convenient ſituation, and what every thing tends and impels us to, muſt be the proper object of our active powers, and the ſcope of our wiſhes and endeavours; and when we aim at this object, and in proportion as we approach it, we ſtrive after the proper perfection of our nature. Thus the nearer we are to it, the greater is our perfection. From what has already been obſerved, it is evident, that this object can be no other than the Deity himſelf; and this aim, nothing but the pure love of God. Every other object is unſatisfactory: every other aim is placed too low for the courſe we have to run, and is inſufficient to content us. On the other hand, if we make God himſelf the immediate object of our deſires, and ſtrive after a pure love of him, perfect and durable bliſs, as far as it can be the lot of a finite creature, muſt be our portion; or rather, in proportion as we approach to a pure love of God, we ſhall alſo approach pure felicity: for the good which we love and deſire will be pure and unalloyed. 'We love the Father of light, in whom there is no viciſſitude of light and darkneſs. His good is unbounded, and his happineſs uncreated. Thus the good we ſeek and expect in him is not defective, inſufficient, or limited, but ever new, uncreated, and uncloying: he is infinity.

Let us not forget to obſerve, on this occaſion, that former defenders of the pure love of God, a Fenelon and a Madame Guyon, if they had not found fewer antagoniſts, would have been treated with more reſpect by them, had they known, like our author, how to give a clear explanation of it, deduce it from fundamental laws of the human mind, and illuſtrate it from analogy and experience.

PROP.

PROP. LXXVI. p. 347.

On Symbolical Books.

UNDER the title of the rule of faith it was natural to expect an expoſition of thoſe doctrines, the knowledge of which, with aſſent to them, our author conſiders as neceſſary to excite and oblige men to purſue the preceding rule of life. It is evident, that, in his opinion, a belief of certain doctrines is only ſo far neceſſary and valuable as it promotes effective religion, or the performance of our duties. He contents himſelf, however, with ſome admonitions to his readers concerning the precepts of natural religion before-mentioned, and only requires them to unite with their belief in theſe precepts faith in the holy ſcriptures, as a complete and ſufficient ſummary of the divine doctrines of ſalvation. He is no friend to human articles or creeds, that are framed to ſerve, together with the Bible, as ſteadfaſt rules of faith and doctrine; deeming it neither neceſſary, nor profitable, to extract any rule of faith from the Bible, and eſtabliſh it under the form of a ſymbolical writing.

So many learned inquiries have been made and publiſhed of late years, reſpecting the neceſſity, juſtice, utility, and value of ſymbolical books, both in England and Germany, that what I have to ſay on the ſubject muſt appear in ſome meaſure ſuperfluous: but a ſubject ſo extenſive and involved is not eaſily exhauſted. He that wiſhes to have a complete view of it may conſult Blackburne's *Confeſſional*, and the various controverſial writings to which that celebrated book has given birth. Of German publications Töllner's *Abhandlung über die ſymboliſchen Bücher*,

Bücher, and the writings of ſome of its late defenders and opponents, particularly deſerve notice. Still I may be permitted to make ſome remarks on the grounds on which Hartley oppoſes human articles of faith, which may tend to ſet them in a clearer light.

The defenders of ſymbolical writings muſt aſſert, or rather demonſtrate, that they are neceſſary and indiſpenſable, if they would manage their cauſe with ſucceſs. They muſt prove, that, in the preſent ſtate of the chriſtian world, the holy ſcriptures alone, without theſe ſupplements or authentic expoſitions, are inſufficient to attain the great purpoſe for which God gave them to us, namely, that we ſhould be made wiſe to ſalvation. They muſt prove, that theſe creeds are more powerful inſtruments againſt the doubts, ignorance, or wickedneſs of thoſe who go aſtray, than the holy ſcriptures; or that the ſenſe of the words of Jeſus, and his apoſtles, may be more clearly and unequivocally laid down in unſcriptural expreſſions, than in thoſe employed by Jeſus, and the ſacred writers. Finally, they muſt prove, that, without human articles of faith, ſuch a variety of opinions, and difference of religion, muſt ariſe, as would render the uniformity of teaching neceſſary to general edification utterly impoſſible. All this muſt be proved, before we can appeal to the right of the church as a community, authorizing it to eſtabliſh opinions for the whole body according to its own pleaſure, and to exclude thoſe from the ſociety who refuſe to ſubmit to them, in defence of the juſtice and obligatory nature of human ordinances in religious matters. No ſociety can poſſeſs a right to make uſeleſs ordinances, or, as the caſe would be here, pernicious ones, contrary to the purpoſes for which it was eſtabliſhed, and derogatory to the reſpect due to its only lawful maſter and legiſlator. No ſociety can poſſeſs a right to exclude from a participation of its benefits thoſe, who,

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before the eſtabliſhment of ſuch uſeleſs or injurious ordinances, were worthy members of it, for refuſing to ſubſcribe to the new articles, whilſt they abide by the laws of their maſter. Thus the indiſpenſableneſs of ſymbolical books is the grand point. If this can be ſet aſide, we muſt reject them, on account of the diſadvantages that muſt enſue from their being eſtabliſhed, the moſt important of which is the prevention of private and free inquiry into religion. On the other hand, if this can be ſupported, the ratification of ſymbolical books will not ceaſe to be an evil, it is true, but it will be a neceſſary evil.

Againſt the neceſſity of human articles of faith, our author objects, amongſt other things, that men may underſtand and interpret them in as various ways as they may the ſcriptures themſelves, and raiſe as endleſs diſputes about their true ſenſe. On this point he appeals to experience, which is here unqueſtionably a much ſurer guide than reaſoning *a priori*. In the Church of England experience clearly ſhews, that, though the thirty-nine articles were eſtabliſhed for the purpoſe of preventing difference of opinion, this end has not been in the ſmalleſt degree promoted by them. One of the ſtrongeſt proofs of this is, that biſhop Burnet, in his learned expoſition of thoſe articles, endeavours ſo to explain them, that people who entertain very different opinions with reſpect to their purport may receive and ſubſcribe them. Probably a ſimilar commentary might be written on the articles of faith of every proteſtant church, with ſimilar effect. If it be ſaid, that ſuch an expoſition is nothing more than a forced and ambiguous interpretation, and that its invalidity may be ſhewn, and the true ſenſe of the ſymbolical writings reſtored and proved, by the rules of ſound criticiſm; I would aſk, whether the obſcurities of the Biblical text might not in like manner be removed, and its true meaning eſtabliſhed on as clear and ſolid proofs,

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at leaſt as far as reſpects the doctrines of the church, which are the proper ſubjects of ſymbolical writings? If ſymbolical books be not rendered uſeleſs as proofs, or for any other purpoſe, from their admitting of various interpretations, why ſhould the ſcriptures be ſo on that account? If this be aſſerted of the latter, it muſt equally hold good of the former; and as ſoon as a diſpute ariſes reſpecting their meaning, they become uſeleſs, and incapable of deciding any thing, and the ſenſe of the diſputed paſſage can only be determined by a new ſymbolical book.

But is it not apparent, from the compoſition and ſtyle of the Bible, compared with thoſe of ſymbolical books, that the former, written in common language, and a popular manner, muſt be more expoſed to ambiguous and indeterminate expreſſions than theſe, which are written ſyſtematically, in philoſophical language and order, and with logical preciſion? At the firſt view, this difference ſeems to give ſymbolical books an advantage over the ſcriptures; but, in my opinion, the contrary will appear, on a cloſer examination. In ſupport of this opinion much might be ſaid, but I muſt here confine myſelf to a few remarks. In the firſt place, I ſhall obſerve, that the inſtruction given us in the ſcriptures is, for the moſt part, conveyed to us in an hiſtorical manner, and is, on that account moſt clear and intelligible to every capacity. The doctrines of our religion are delivered in the hiſtory of our Saviour: and this hiſtory is the chriſtian's ſyſtem of inſtruction. Hiſtory is in itſelf more intelligible than any other ſpecies of compoſition, particularly if written with ſimplicity, in a natural order, and without embelliſhment. To underſtand the principal facts it relates, at leaſt, nothing more is neceſſary than a knowledge of the language in which it is written; and with a little attention I can diſcover the doctrines compriſed in thoſe facts, and founded on them, or thoſe occaſionally interſperſed

amongſt them, with more certainty and facility than if they ſtood alone, unconnected with any circumſtances. The ſaying of Jeſus, for example, *I am the reſurrection and the life*, might admit of various explanations: but if we connect it with the awaking of one from the dead, on which occaſion it was ſpoken, no one can miſtake its true ſenſe, that does not wilfully ſhut his eyes againſt the light. The Epiſtles of the Apoſtles, it is true, want, in ſome degree, this advantage of the hiſtorical ſtyle: ſtill, however, they refer to the hiſtory of Jeſus and other facts, and as they elucidate theſe, they are reciprocally illuſtrated by them. Beſides this, the apoſtolical epiſtles reſpect the ſituation, ſtate, and circumſtances of thoſe for whom they were intended, the particular complexion of the times in which they were written, and the relation in which the apoſtles ſtood to their proſelytes. Now all this is hiſtorical, and the more thoroughly the reader is acquainted with this hiſtorical part, the fewer ambiguities will he find. Thus what the ſacred writings loſe in preciſion and accuracy from their popular ſtyle, their being hiſtorical will amply make up to the reader.

Let us farther obſerve, that a methodical and ſcientific delivery of doctrines is not always ſufficient to determine their meaning with preciſion, and prevent all poſſibility of a miſconſtruction. The language and method of the ſchools are advantageous only when the writer has a fundamental knowledge of the ſubject which he handles ſcientifically, when his inquiries have brought him to a clear and juſt idea of it, and when thoſe for whom he writes can follow the ſteps of his reaſoning, and enter fully into the ſubſtance of it with him. Where theſe requiſites are wanting, this rigid method, and philoſophical language, ſerve only to perplex both himſelf and his readers. The appearance of ſolidity will lead the writer to take his arbitrary notions, deduced from mere

mere appearances, for the trueſt and beſt, and an artful combination of words, for a well-grounded concatenation of ideas, and of the ſubject itſelf; whilſt the reader, whether it be the fault of himſelf or the writer, racks his imagination to acquire clear and preciſe ideas in vain. If he could not be made to underſtand the ſubject, he might at leaſt acquire ſome uſeful notions of it, if it were delivered in familiar language, and common modes of expreſſion. That this is the general caſe with moſt, if not all writers of ſymbolical books, is evident from this, that they, for the moſt part, endeavouring to give rules how men ſhould think, or rather expreſs themſelves, on the myſteries of religion, and moſt abſtruſe philoſophical ſubtleties, intermingle with the popular the philoſophical method and language, which are in ſome meaſure unſuitable, to the extreme detriment of perſpicuity. How can their logical method contribute to preciſion, and ſecurity againſt miſtake, on ſubjects of which themſelves had no real and determinate idea, and which, according to their own confeſſion, were expreſſed in unintelligible words? Certainly it does nothing more than give them an appearance of having ſaid ſomething, when in fact they have ſaid nothing; and, if we would form any conceptions of the ſubject, we muſt lay aſide the language and diſtinctions of the ſchools, and have recourſe to the popular expreſſions of the ſcriptures themſelves. Frequently when theſe dogmatiſts would decide philoſophical queſtions, they confound the language of the ſchools with that of the ſcriptures; a fruitful ſource of error and perplexity. For the juſtice of this remark, we may refer the reader to a ſtriking example which Hartley gives in what he ſays on free-will: an example extremely applicable to the point in queſtion, and well calculated to illuſtrate it, as the queſtion concerning free-will, *de libero arbitrio*, and ſome ſubjects related to it, is

very pointedly introduced into moſt, if not all confeſſions, and decided in the ambiguous manner remarked by Hartley.

For theſe and ſimilar reaſons, ambiguities and obſcurities muſt ariſe, though every poſſible precaution be taken to prevent them. Where there is no real and clear idea, that is, ſuch as we may diſcover from the apparent ſenſe, or from analogy, there is nothing that the expoſitor can comprehend, and he is liable to form different conceptions, whilſt he adheres to the eſtabliſhed language. and the expreſſions employed. When the writer does not underſtand what he means himſelf, he cannot expect that his readers ſhould. In all ſuch caſes ſymbolical books can only promote uniformity of expreſſion, not identity of notions and ſentiments; and the leaſt deviation from this uniformity of expreſſion, or the alteration of a ſingle word, will produce a diverſity of opinion: a ſufficient proof, that nothing clear and determinate has been impreſſed on the mind, and that terms of art have ſupplied the place of ideas. The unity thus promoted is like the peace of which Tacitus ſpeaks: *ubi ſolitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant.* We may go ſtill farther: not unfrequently the expreſſions of articles of faith are induſtriouſly contrived to be indeterminate and equivocal, to allow ſome difference of opinion, at leaſt in points conſidered as not abſolutely eſſential.

Finally, did ſymbolical writings expreſs ideas, and points of doctrine, with all due accuracy and preciſion, ſtill they would be no longer clear and determinate, than the philoſophical ſyſtem which they followed prevailed, and its language remained unaltered. Should this philoſophy, and this language, give way to a new ſyſtem, and a new phraſeology, obſcurity and ambiguity muſt enſue, and the words of the confeſſion would not convey the meaning of the compoſer, but a different, and frequently an oppoſite

oppoſite one. In confirmation of this, we have a ſtriking example in the word *preſence*, as it is uſed in the ſymbolical books of the Lutheran church, with reſpect to the body of Chriſt in the Lord's ſupper. When they were drawn up, probably, ſomething more was underſtood thereby than an effectual preſence, which the followers of Wolfe's philoſophy now conſider it to imply. This change of ideas has at leaſt occaſioned a conſiderable difference in the Lutheran doctrines reſpecting the Lord's ſupper; which difference appears ſo important to a celebrated divine, that he accuſes thoſe, who admit the preſence of Chriſt only according to Wolfe's idea, of ſeceding from the Lutheran church. But how is this opinion to be maintained and verified? Unqueſtionably on exegetical principles: for the grounds of the foregoing Lutheran tenet are as clear in the holy ſcriptures, as the tenet itſelf in the ſymbolical books. Cannot the learned inquirer, then, as clearly prove it from the former, as from the latter? Moſt aſſuredly, if he be impartial, and not obſtinately blind to the truth. Even ſuppoſing him to be prejudiced againſt the truth, will he be leſs ſo when he meets with it in ſymbolical books, than when he finds it in the ſcriptures? and conſequently ſee it more clearly, and with greater readineſs, in the former, than in the latter? Surely not, unleſs he acknowledge the ſymbolical books to be obligatory, and they have a power of compelling him to embrace their doctrines. If he but deem them of equal authority with the ſcriptures themſelves, and conſider it as neceſſary to conform his opinions to thoſe they deliver, as to thoſe contained in the ſcriptures, they will only be of equal weight with him.

If preciſe and definite forms be indiſpenſable to the maintenance of a neceſſary uniformity in teaching, why are they confined to the doctrines of belief, excluding thoſe of morality? Hereſies and ſchiſms

are not leſs poſſible in the latter, and are far more dangerous, as Dr. Töllner has well obſerved. The Bible does not preſent us with a regular ſyſtem of morality, any more than of faith. The duties, as well as the theory of chriſtianity, are delivered in popular language, and without art. Allegorical and hyperbolical modes of expreſſion, that ſeem to require an explanation, and more ſtrict definition, occur equally in both. Many of our Redeemer's precepts of morality, particularly in the ſermon on the mount, are delivered in very general terms, requiring to be explained with as much care, and conſideration of the concomitant and occaſional circumſtances, as doctrines of faith, if we wiſh not to apply them improperly. Such, for inſtance, are the precepts termed *conſilia evangelica*, on which we have enlarged in a preceding note. Clear as the literal meaning of theſe and other precepts may be, the application of them to particular caſes is attended with conſiderable difficulties: and as this application of them is neceſſary to be conſidered, for the inſtruction of chriſtians, and general edification, it ſhould ſeem, that a ſymbolical ſtandard would here be particularly conducive to orthodoxy. But let it be farther conſidered, that different opinions, or contradictions, between teachers on the ſubject of morality are far more obvious and ſhocking, and make a much ſtronger impreſſion on the minds of the hearers, than diſagreements in that part of chriſtianity, to determine which has been the chief aim of the ſymbolical books of all parties, namely theological hypotheſes. With reſpect to the latter, two teachers of the ſame communion may differ widely from each other in their doctrines, if the one do not announce his opinion in the moſt preciſe manner, for the declared purpoſe of oppoſing the other, without their diſagreement being ſuſpected by their hearers, to whom theſe ſpeculative notions are neither important

tant nor comprehenſible, however weighty they may appear to the learned dogmatiſts: and even ſhould they ſuſpect it, it would intereſt them little, whilſt they conſidered, that their duties would remain unaltered, whatever way the abſtruſe queſtion might be decided. Far otherwiſe would it be, ſhould one of the teachers permit the mode of conduct, amuſements, and pleaſures, to which they had been accuſtomed, and the other condemn them. Far otherwiſe would it affect their minds, ſhould the one lead them to ſuſpect thoſe acts of piety which the other had recommended, and repreſent to them as fallacious the hope of a ſpeedy converſion, with which the other had flattered them. In general, the perplexities and ſcandal that may be, and actually are, occaſioned by erroneous teaching, ariſe on points to which ſymbolical books have paid little attention, and in which men know how to diſpenſe with their aſſiſtance.

Let now the impartial reader decide, how far the judgment of our author concerning articles of faith is juſt, from the preceding compariſon of human creeds with the ſcriptures, and from experience. To many, perhaps, it will not appear altogether improbable, that the holy ſcriptures alone, without any human additions, or authoritative interpretations, are ſufficient to maintain the unity of doctrine neceſſary for general inſtruction and edification; ſo far at leaſt as this unity requires nothing but the principles of truth, and not reſpect to the heads of church or ſtate. It muſt alſo be obſerved, that the only neceſſary unity of opinion is intelligible to the common capacity of mankind, without the aid of learning or philoſophy: this is what concerns the facts of chriſtianity, as delivered in the creed of the apoſtles, and in the doctrines and precepts immediately deducible from it. All other theories and hypotheſes appertain not to general edification,

or ſhould be propounded with modeſty as private opinions, and left to the hearer's examination. If a teacher, from his knowledge of his flock, have reaſon to ſuppoſe, that a conſiderable portion of them have not ſufficient knowledge and wiſdom to prove ſuch theories by the holy ſcriptures, and are incapable of forming a right judgment of them, ſo that his hearers muſt blindly believe what he delivers, merely from their reſpect to his authority, this ought to prevent his uttering them from the pulpit.

PROP. LXXXV. p. 380.

On the Expectations of the Bodies politic of the preſent State of the Earth, and particularly of the Jews.

In proof of the expectations which our author announces in this ſection, he appeals to prophecies in the holy ſcriptures, it is true, but he does not cite them with accuracy: ſtill leſs does he expound them, and ſhew, that they actually foretel the events which he is led by them to expect, though theſe prophecies muſt be the principal, if not ſole grounds of his expectations. For were we to judge from the experience of paſt times what may happen hereafter, and form our prognoſtic from the courſe of the world, theſe expectations may turn out in many reſpects differently. It would not have been amiſs, too, had our author been more preciſe and circumſtantial in his arguments. He ought not to have explained the prophecies concerning the latter days ſo authoritatively as he has done, or conſidered their meaning as ſo determinate and preciſe, as it is well known, that many expoſitors of the prophetic paſſages which he had in view have not found in them any grounds for ſuch expectations, and others have deemed the language of the prophecies,

phecies, particularly thoſe of the Old Teſtament that relate to this point, ſo enigmatical and obſcure, and the principles of interpreting prophecies as yet ſo indefinite, that they conſider themſelves bound to withhold giving an opinion. Prudence appears to me to recommend the latter, as the ſafeſt part that can be taken. It has never yet been aſcertained, how far theſe prophecies have already been fulfilled, and what parts of them are accompliſhed. Thus we want that key to the prophetic writings, which a compariſon of what is paſt with the types and expreſſions under which it is couched would give us, to decypher the prophecies of events that are ſtill to come. Whilſt we want this beſt aid to an interpretation of the prophetic mode of writing, it is impoſſible for us to determine, with certainty, when, and how far, images and expreſſions taken from earthly things, and from temporal happineſs and unhappineſs, muſt be received in a ſtrictly literal ſenſe, or as figurative and hyperbolical. As far, however, as we can with any confidence employ ſuch aids, we ſeem to be juſtified in underſtanding the prophecies in a figurative and ſpiritual ſenſe. Every one muſt admit that our Lord foretold the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the overthrow of the Jewiſh republic in expreſſions, and by figures, that we muſt not interpret literally. He ſays, amongſt other things, that he ſhould be ſeen coming in the clouds, and that ſigns ſhould appear in the ſun, moon, and ſtars; yet nothing of this literally happened. Even at his firſt coming upon earth, as it is called, the prophets of the Old Teſtament had repreſented him as the founder of an earthly kingdom. Now as it is obvious, that this did not happen, and that he never ſo appeared, what reaſon have we to preſume, that a ſecond coming, totally different from the firſt, ſhould be announced in expreſſions and figures, for the moſt part, not differing from thoſe by which his firſt coming

coming was unqueſtionably announced? An authentic explanation of a prophecy of the prophet Joel, in the ſecond chapter of the Acts of the Apoſtles, ſeems to me a ſtrong argument for the ſpiritual meaning of every preſage relating to the kingdom of the Meſſiah. The prophetic words, *I will ſhew wonders in heaven above, and ſigns in the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapour of ſmoke,* are not taken in the proper and ſtrict ſenſe.

Let us add to this the beautiful picture of general happineſs and a golden age, with which Iſaiah, in his eleventh chapter, delineates the latter days, and the commencement of the Meſſiah's reign upon earth; if we compare it with what actually happened at that time, it will appear, how extremely cautious we ought to be, in applying to the imagery of the prophecies a groſs terreſtrial meaning. The expreſſion of St. Peter, that *no prophecy is of private interpretation,* that is, can only be explained completely by the events which actually accompliſh it, ſeems to hold good, in a particular ſenſe, of all theſe prophecies. We ſhall be perfectly juſtified, therefore, ſo long as nothing more certain and preciſe is made out, in conſidering as uncertain the prophetic grounds alleged for the expectation of the deſtruction and abolition of all the preſent powers and kingdoms of the earth, by a fifth monarchy, or millennium as it is called, and of the eſtabliſhment of this kingdom of the righteous, itſelf. On the dogmatic grounds that may be brought in ſupport of ſuch an expectation, I lay no great ſtreſs. The public atteſtation of Jeſus, ſufficiently illuſtrated by what follows, that his kingdom is not of this world, ſeems to me to contradict every expectation of his aſſuming any temporal dominion; neither do I think its force has ever been weakened by any counter-arguments. At leaſt, I conſider it as a juſt and valid objection againſt the expectation of ſuch great changes, that

we

we cannot poſſibly conceive when, how, or by what means they can be effected. Still more weighty is the objection, that theſe expectations are not more fully demonſtrable from the ſcriptures, than that of the millennium, as they are chiefly, if not wholly, founded on a prophecy in the Revelation of St. John. It is well known how much may be ſaid againſt the divine authority of that book, and how weakly the arguments of ſome of its learned opponents, particularly of Semler and Michaelis, have been oppoſed. The point is not, perhaps, abſolutely decided: yet I think no impartial inquirer, after having duly weighed and conſidered the arguments for and againſt the authenticity of the Revelation, can maintain, as true and certain, any doctrine or expectation founded ſolely on that book. Till ſomething more deciſive is offered on this point, I can find neither the complete deſtruction and abolition of all the preſent powers and kingdoms of the earth, by the eſtabliſhment of a fifth monarchy, or millennium, nor the approaching temporal dominion of Chriſt, according to the expectations announced by our author, to be clearly foretold in the prophecies.

The expectation of a future general converſion and gathering of the Jews into the church of Chriſt, I muſt make an exception, as it ſeems to me, to be foretold with ſufficient clearneſs, in the well-known paſſage, Rom. xi. 26. There are ſome, indeed, who interpret the words of the apoſtle, "all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved," of a ſpiritual Iſrael, or the whole number of believers of the church of Chriſt, compoſed of Jews and Gentiles; and others who refer it to the Jewiſh nation, but conſider it as already fulfilled. The ſuppoſition of a ſpiritual Iſrael being meant, however, does not agree with the context, as, throughout the whole of the diſcourſe, of which it makes a part, the Iſrael of the

the apoſtle unqueſtionably means the Jewiſh nation. The ſame Iſrael of which he ſays, that blindneſs in part is happened to it, muſt alſo be underſtood when he ſays, that all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved. Further, the apoſtle declares, that he announces a myſtery, that is, according to the ſcriptural ſenſe of the word, a thing hitherto unknown, or an occurrence not to be diſcovered by human foreſight. Now that Iſrael ſhould be in part blind could be no ſuch myſtery, for this was well known to every chriſtian: or that the fulneſs of the Gentiles ſhould come in, for it was already known, that the heathens ſhould be received into the church of Chriſt. Paul had already preached the goſpel to them, and converted many of them to chriſtianity. Neither can it be deemed a myſtery, that all thoſe Jews and Gentiles, who were choſen by God to conſtitute the church of Chriſt, ſhould actually walk according to it. For this was by no means an event undiſcoverable to the human underſtanding; as it was already in part fulfilled, and the complete accompliſhment of it muſt be highly probable, nay could not be doubtful to any chriſtian. Beſides, were we to underſtand by all Iſrael that ſhould be ſaved the ſpiritual Iſrael, it would be ſo far from being ſuitable to the end for which the apoſtle announced this myſtery, that it would be totally repugnant to it. He diſcovers his aim clearly, in that he ſays: "for I would not, brethren," the chriſtian Gentiles to whom he had before particularly addreſſed himſelf, verſe 13. "that ye ſhould be ignorant of this myſtery, *leſt ye ſhould be wiſe in your own conceits.*" He had already warned them, that they ſhould not boaſt againſt the branches of the olive tree into which they were grafted, that is, againſt the choſen Iſrael, or deſpiſe them as utterly rejected and caſt off by God. This explanation is congenial to the deſign of the apoſtle, whoſe myſtery was

was intended to ſuppreſs the pride of the believing Gentiles, and make them think better of the Jews. Any explanation, that does not accord with the attainment of this purpoſe, muſt be rejected. How would it contribute to leſſen the pride of the Gentiles, to tell them, that the whole ſpiritual Iſrael, that is, all whom God ſhould appoint to become members of the church, from every nation on earth, without diſtinction, ſhould be ſaved? How does this information tend to inſpire the believing Gentiles with leſs contempt for the unbelieving Jews? Would this explanation of the myſtery change their opinion, that the Jews were utterly rejected by God? Admitting this ſenſe of the words, the apoſtle ſays nothing to his purpoſe, nothing that would make the heathens more courteous to the Jews. But his words are perfectly adapted to his intentions, when he ſays: the blindneſs which has happened to a part of the Jews, ſhall not continue for ever, but only till the bulk of the Gentiles ſhall be converted. This blindneſs will then be removed. Thus you heathens muſt not imagine, that theſe unhappy people are wholly loſt, and that all God's great deſigns and purpoſes with them have terminated in an utter rejection. No: the gifts and calls of God to them will never be done away.

This ſenſe is farther confirmed by the quotation from Iſaiah: "There ſhall come out of Sion the deliverer, and ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob." Were not this the true ſenſe of the words, but a ſpiritual Iſrael were ſpoken of, why ſhould the apoſtle take the trouble to ſhew the little incredibility of the change foretold by him? They who "abide not in unbelief ſhall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou *(an heathen)* wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree: how much more ſhall theſe, which be the natural

branches,

branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree?" To this follow the words in which he clearly and directly says, what he had before expressed figuratively. How little does the explanation of a spiritual Israel agree with all this! Let us also take the following into consideration. The counsels of God are here laid open to the apostle, and he lets us perceive a certain analogy between the choosing of the heathen, and the future choosing of Israel. After he has made the general remark, that God has not repented of his gifts, or of his calling, and that he will not alter, or depart from his purposes and promises to his chosen people, he adds the following words: "for as ye (the heathen) in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: (both here and elsewhere the apostle represents the unbelief of the Jews as the occasion of the reception of the Gentiles, and Christ himself seems to do the same in the parable of the wedding of the king's son) even so have these (the Jews) also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy." That is, as appears from the context, God will suffer them to continue in blindness and unbelief, as formerly the heathen world, that he may one day have mercy upon them of his own free grace, without the least shadow of desert in them, more than there had been in the heathen. The apostle then proceeds to the fundamental principle of the kingdom of God, which clears up the whole of God's conduct both to the Jews and Gentiles, and gives us a key to it. *For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.* He hath suffered both Jews and Gentiles to continue in like blindness, and the same condemnation, that all he should do to deliver each might be the effect of mercy alone, and be acknowledged as a free and unmerited grace. Difficult as the latter sentence is, from its connection with the whole

whole, it can have no other meaning than that which is here given to it. How much the expectation of a future general converſion of the Jews is confirmed by it, muſt be obvious to every one. I ſay a *future* general converſion of the Jews: for there are ſome who allow the choſen people of Iſrael to be here meant, yet maintain that this converſion happened long ago, and ſoon after the apoſtle's prediction. This ſeems to me a forced conſtruction of the words, and not ſuitable to the context. Hiſtory mentions no converſion of the Jews in the earlier periods of chriſtianity, ſubſequent to this prediction of the apoſtle, ſo conſiderable as to be deemed an accompliſhment of it, with any appearance of reaſon. We find no account of any number of the Jewiſh nation embracing chriſtianity that can be compared with the earlieſt converſions which followed the firſt and ſecond preaching of Peter, or which were brought about by the labours of the other apoſtles, previous to this prediction of Paul. Already when Paul wrote, he had quitted the hardened Jews for the heathens, and had given up the hope of effecting more with them than had already been done. If, notwithſtanding the conſiderable number of Jews already converted, and though the firſt ſtem of the chriſtians conſiſted of Jews, it be ſtill ſaid, that Iſrael was rejected, how could a ſubſequent weaker and very limited converſion be deemed a fulfilling of the words, *all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved?* Was the fulneſs of the Gentiles already come in, in thoſe early days? However limited we may think ourſelves juſtified in ſuppoſing the meaning of this *all* to be, it would be unnatural to ſuppoſe, that the converſion of ſome individuals could be termed a general converſion, in oppoſition to that of ſeveral thouſands at once. It would be abſurd to hold up the making a few occaſional proſelytes to chriſtianity as a converſion of the whole, whilſt the majority of the nation remained unconverted,

unconverted, and conſidered themſelves as a choſen people, in oppoſition to the chriſtians.

After the important converſions that had already happened, how could the apoſtle term ſuch inconſiderable ones, which were indeed very probable, and might be foreſeen without any divine revelation, a myſtery, or an occurrence not to be preconceived by the human underſtanding? For, after what had already taken place, it might eaſily be preſumed that many individuals of the Jewiſh nation would embrace the chriſtian religion. If the apoſtle meant to ſay no more than this, he ſpoke very hyperbolically, when he repreſented this prediction as a myſtery. But it was highly improbable, and moſt myſterious, according to the appearance of things, that a people, which now denied Jeſus of Nazareth, ſhould acknowledge him to be the Meſſiah, and that a belief in him ſhould become their national religion. If it be ſaid, that the aſſurance of a diſtant, though great converſion, would have contributed little to the conſolation of the then afflicted Jews: I would anſwer: it would comfort them at leaſt as much as other joyful prophecies of the Old Teſtament, predicting very diſtant events, in the accompliſhment of which they could not participate. But the apoſtle does not give this as the deſign of his prediction: he aſſigns as a reaſon for it, that it was intended to prevent the Gentiles from deſpiſing the Jews, as a nation totally rejected by God. Yet how could the occaſional converſion of a few of the Jews contribute to this purpoſe? If the conſideration that ſo many Jews had been made proſelytes to chriſtianity on the firſt promulgation of it, in a manner far more ſtriking than has ever ſince happened, even to the preſent day, and that the firſt preachers of the goſpel, and the firſt chriſtian communities were Jews, were inſufficient to induce the heathens to judge more favourably of that people, and its final deſtination; how much leſs would

would the following ſlighter converſions be capable of bringing them to a gentler and more kind opinion? After all that has happened in that reſpect, from thoſe times to the preſent day, has a chriſtian leſs reaſon now to conſider the Jews as a people forſaken by God, than then?

Finally, if, to weaken theſe arguments, it be advanced, that σωθήσεται muſt be tranſlated, will be ſaved, in a conditional ſenſe, included in verſe 23, that is, ſo far as they do not remain in unbelief, and underſtand by πας Ἰσραὴλ, all who believe; this would be ſuppoſing the apoſtle to diſcloſe a very important myſtery. He would ſay then: now Iſrael is in part blind and unbelieving, till the appointed number of the Gentiles enter into the church, and ſo all Iſrael, that is, all who ſhall believe, will be ſaved. An important diſcovery, indeed, and very capable of abating the pride of the believing heathen!

Nothing remains for us then, but that we underſtand the myſtery as relating to a future national converſion, which, little as the appearance of it may be at this time, and little as it probably can be in the preſent ſtate of chriſtianity, and with the now prevailing doctrines, will moſt aſſuredly happen.

Whether a general converſion of the Jews will be accompanied with their reſtoration to the land of Paleſtine, ſeems to me far leſs clearly determined by the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, than it does to our author. The prophecies contained in the third and fifth books of Moſes, and other parts of the Old Teſtament, that are commonly adduced in proof of this, contain many circumſtances from which it clearly appears that theſe prophecies are already fulfilled by the Babyloniſh captivity, and the return from it. At leaſt it is inapplicable to the preſent ſtate of that people, and their preſent long diſperſion, as idolatry is every where announced as their prevailing ſin, and the cauſe of their baniſhment: but it is well

known, that ſince their being ſet free by Cyrus, and ſtill more ſince their diſperſion by the Romans, this is a ſin to which they have been by no means addicted.

Far more probable, in my opinion, and more clearly grounded on prophecies of the Old Teſtament, and ſayings of Chriſt, is the expectation that the goſpel will be ſome time or other preached to all nations, and that chriſtianity will be the prevailing religion of the earth. Neither reaſon, nor experience offers any objections to the arguments in favour of this expectation, which our author adduces from the nature of chriſtianity, namely, that every important truth will, ſooner or later, riſe victorious over and ſuppreſs its oppoſing errors. It may be objected, indeed, that chriſtianity has yet made little progreſs amongſt the nations of infidels: nay, that in countries where it is the eſtabliſhed religion, its influence and authority ſeem daily to decay. But the obvious reaſon of both is, that the ſyſtem of chriſtianity which is preached to unbelievers is too much altered and corrupted by foreign additions, and muſt be brought back to its original purity and truth, before it can triumph over ignorance, infidelity and ſuperſtition. Before chriſtianity is ſo purified, it cannot produce the expected effects, but muſt continue to experience various oppoſitions; till at length theſe oppoſitions will become the means and occaſion of reſtoring it to its firſt important truth and purity.

PROP.

PROP. XCIII. p. 407.

On the Terms of Salvation.

OUR author here handles the difficult and important queſtion, how far faith in Chriſt is to be conſidered as the means of ſalvation. Many things that he ſays on the ſubject are good and juſt; but as he has not developed and defined the idea of faith, what he aſcribes to it will ſcarcely appear ſufficiently clear and methodical to the reader. "Chriſt our Saviour," ſays he, "is ſent from heaven, God manifeſt in the fleſh, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life; that, though our ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhould by him, by means of his ſufferings, and our faith, be made as white as wool; and the great puniſhment, which muſt otherwiſe have been inflicted upon us, according to what we call the courſe of nature, be averted. Faith then in Chriſt, the righteous, will ſupply the place of that righteouſneſs, and ſinleſs perfection, to which we cannot attain. And yet this faith does not make void the law, and ſtrict conditions, above deſcribed; but, on the contrary, eſtabliſhes them. For no man can have this faith in Chriſt, but he who complies with the conditions. If our faith do not overcome the world, and ſhew itſelf by works, it is of no avail. It contains all the other chriſtian graces; and we can never know that we have it, but by having the chriſtian graces, which are its fruits." Hence he infers, that a mere aſſurance, or ſtrong perſuaſion, of a man's own ſalvation, or, as it is elſewhere expreſſed, a mere confident acceptation and imputation of the merits of the blood of Chriſt, is neither a condition, nor a

pledge of it. Such a ſtrong perſuaſion may be generated, whilſt a man continues in many groſs corruptions: and, on the contrary, a man may poſſeſs every chriſtian virtue, without having a firm aſſurance of his own ſalvation. Fear, in particular, cannot well be conſiſtent with ſuch an aſſurance. On the queſtion concerning the privilege and advantage of faith, he obſerves, firſt, that the righteouſneſs and ſufferings of Chriſt, with our faith in them, are neceſſary to ſave us from our ſins, and to enable us to perform our imperfect righteouſneſs: and, ſecondly, that faith is propoſed by the ſcriptures as the means appointed by God for rendering imperfect righteouſneſs equivalent, in his ſight, to perfect, and even of transforming it into perfect, as ſoon as we are freed from this body of fleſh and death. Faith, he adds, improves righteouſneſs, and every degree of righteouſneſs is a proportional preparative for faith; and, if it do not produce faith, will end in ſelf-righteouſneſs, and *ſatanical* pride.

To reduce theſe various aſſertions into due order, and to ſhew how far they are conſiſtent with each other, with the nature of man, and with the moſt obvious interpretations of the ſcriptures, we will endeavour to give as juſt, inſtructive, and comprehenſive a notion of the nature of faith in general, and of faith in Chriſt in particular, as an hypothetical explanation will admit. Faith, or belief, both in common language, and in the language of the ſcriptures, ſignifies the receiving and admitting ſomewhat as true, from the teſtimony and authority of others, and on account of that teſtimony and authority. When I conſider as true any fact teſtified to me by others, without any experience of it myſelf, or when I admit any propoſition in mathematics or philoſophy on the authority of a man acquainted with either ſcience, without my being capable of perceiving the proofs or demonſtrations of it, I may be

be ſaid to believe this fact, or propoſition, in the true ſenſe of the word. On the other hand, if I have experienced the firſt myſelf, or proved the latter in my own mind, I do not merely believe, I know and perceive the truth. In what follows, I ſhall endeavour to prove that this notion is conformable both to the common uſe of words, and to the ſcriptures: at the ſame time, I ſhall endeavour, as much as poſſible, to remove any objections that may be made to it. Thus faith is oppoſed to our own knowledge and judgment, and is properly a truſt in the knowledge and judgment of another, which is more or leſs effectual, in proportion to the nature of the object, and the ſcope of the faith. I ſay, more or leſs effectual: for faith has always ſome end, and, as on every occaſion it is intended to produce ſome good, muſt be conſidered as an active principle. Let us now conſider the natural frame of man, which renders it neceſſary, that he ſhould be led to a certain end by knowledge and judgment. This is moſt naturally effected by his own: but, when his own are inſufficient, he muſt employ thoſe of others. There are two ways in which a man may be guided by the knowledge of another. Either whilſt his intellectual faculties are totally paſſive, and at reſt, as the machine of the world is governed and led by the wiſdom of God; which blind guidance excludes faith, as well as all activity of the underſtanding: or a man may be ſo guided, that his mind may be employed, improved, and perfected, whilſt he is himſelf an agent. This laſt mode of being guided by the knowledge of another preſuppoſes and requires faith; without which it is impoſſible. In this caſe, the underſtanding, enlightened by a ſuperior knowledge, receives the concluſions and inſtructions of this ſuperior knowledge, following and obeying them from its own choice, not indeed on internal evidence drawn from its own ſtores, but from a confidence in that

wiſdom which guides it, and gives it theſe inſtructions, ariſing from a conviction of the benefits of this guidance, and its obedience to it. Whenever it happens, that a weaker underſtanding is guided by a ſuperior one, it muſt be effected by faith, if not in an irrational manner, and by mere phyſical powers. Thus the faith, by which God would lead man to ſalvation, is nothing leſs than a poſitive and arbitrary ordinance of God. It is by no means confined to religion. It is the abſolutely neceſſary and ſole mean by which every child is inſtructed and governed, and by which every ignorant and unexperienced man muſt be guided.

According to this hypotheſis, there appears to me to be no proper ground of contention between faith and reaſon. A rational or well-founded faith (and who would not reject a faith unfounded and irrational) is ſo little repugnant to reaſon, that, in a multitude of caſes, and under proper reſtrictions, it would be highly unreaſonable not to believe. The caſe where faith is rational is where we want the judgment, knowledge, and experience neceſſary to the attainment of our purpoſes; where a preſent weakneſs of our intellectual faculties, or a diſadvantageous ſituation, is a clog upon our action; or where we are compelled to determine and act, before we have acquired due knowledge and experience for the government of our determinations, and guidance of our actions. Still more is it rational, when we cannot acquire a knowledge and judgment of our own, without the greateſt diſadvantages, and moſt hazardous delay, unleſs under the guidance of ſome ſuperior power, and in the ſchool of faith. In theſe caſes, we muſt have faith if we would ſeek our own good, and not be blind to it. But when, according to the ſuppoſition, our own knowledge with reſpect to the object of faith is defective, how can we rightly judge and determine whom we are to believe, to walk

walk with ſafety? Amongſt the guides offering themſelves to us, are we not in danger of truſting to ſuch, whoſe want of ſkill or honeſty will miſlead us? To avoid this danger, our faith muſt be well founded, or we muſt have a rational aſſurance both of the capacity and good-will of our guide. Now it is eaſy to ſee that, with reſpect to the latter, we may have ſufficiently ſtrong and independent proofs: that is, we may have proofs ſufficient to convince us, that our guide has the good will to lead us right, though we have no knowledge of the circumſtance itſelf in which we are led. If, for inſtance, I know nothing of agriculture, I may yet be able to judge, whether he, to whom I intruſt the management of my farm, means me well, or not. As to the other point, the capacity of the guide, it would ſeem, that, to judge rightly of it, ſuch a knowledge is requiſite, as would render faith unneceſſary. But if we apply it to any practical art, we ſhall find, that the moſt inexperienced may have a well grounded judgment of the ability of his guide, or at leaſt a knowledge ſufficient to enable him to form a rational determination. He has only to inquire, whether he in whom he would confide have given inconteſtable proofs of his abilities, have himſelf arrived at the point to which he would bring him, or have already performed what he requires of him. If I be deſirous of building a houſe, yet know nothing of architecture, I muſt truſt to the architect. However incapable I may be of proving his ſcience and ſkill, I am able to judge whether he have executed, in other buildings, what I require in mine; and, if I find he have, I ſhould act very abſurdly to queſtion his ability. Muſt not the greater part of mankind who truſt their lives to a phyſician, found their confidence in him ſolely on the cures he has performed? Were it neceſſary that the ſick man ſhould firſt examine the theoretical ſkill and ſcience of his phyſician, how few

would ever be able to determine to ſeek help from one! It is ſufficient for us to know, that he has already cured himſelf or others of the diſeaſe with which we are afflicted; and this would render our confidence in him well founded and juſtifiable.

I am much miſtaken if our Lord Jeſus do not give us a teſt by which we may judge of the capacity of our teachers, when he ſays, that we ſhall know a prophet by his fruits. By theſe fruits, I do not imagine that he means the doctrines or ſyſtem of the prophet, but his works; that is, his whole conduct, and his way of thinking, as it appears in his behaviour. Could we ſuppoſe it to imply, that a teacher is known by his doctrines, it would be ſaying nothing. We might ſtill aſk, how ſhall I know theſe doctrines to be true? and be no wiſer than before. How would the ignorant and unlearned, who ſtood in need of theſe doctrines, be capable of judging of their juſtice and truth? But if we ſuppoſe that the prophet actually had, or profeſſed the deſign of making his pupils virtuous, juſt, peaceful, and happy, and that he was a phyſician to the ſoul, who meant to heal the various ailments and diſorders of the mind; there would be no better means, for thoſe who could not bring his doctrines to the teſt of a profound examination, to diſtinguiſh a true from a falſe prophet, than to obſerve, what would not be above the reach of their judgment, whether he were actually honeſt and diſintereſted; whether his deeds were good, or evil; whether he himſelf enjoyed inward peace and ſatisfaction, to which he promiſed to conduct his followers; and whether he had freed himſelf from the common faults, frailties, and diſorders of human nature.

Let me firſt of all obſerve here, that Jeſus Chriſt confirmed himſelf our beſt and ſureſt guide, in the way in which, according to his rule, prophets and teachers ſhould merit the confidence of their hearers, not

not by his doctrines merely, but particularly by his fruits, or works; and further, by his life, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion. He ſhewed his diſciples and followers in himſelf a pattern of what he taught them to do. He was, in the moſt eminent degree, an humble and upright worſhipper of God, a meek and warm friend of mankind; all his inclinations and deſires, without the leaſt exception, were under the controul of reaſon, and he was moſt perfectly maſter of himſelf. Enjoying inward peace, and honoured with the acceptance of God, the conſciouſneſs of his innocence, virtue, and holineſs, ſet him above the wants of human nature, and made him inſenſible to the injuries or contempt of mankind. Well might he ſay: *learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart. Take up my yoke*, that is, follow my inſtructions, *and you ſhall find peace to your ſouls.* This peace, which never deſerted him, which all his words and works, and his whole conduct, placed in the ſtrongeſt light, his diſciples might well hope to attain by imitating him; as they could not with any ſhadow of reaſon doubt that he, who poſſeſſed it in ſo eminent a degree, underſtood the art of attaining it, and was capable of teaching it to them. Thus when he offered himſelf to man as his guide to wiſdom and virtue, to peace in God, and to a bleſſed immortality, his conduct was the pledge of his truth. With ſteadfaſtneſs unappalled, and unſhaken confidence in God, he went, through a life of tribulation, to a death, unqueſtionably rendered more terrible and painful to him by the bitter contempt of his generally known merit and worth, the triumphant laughter and ſarcaſms of his enemies, and the maledictions of his own nation, than by all the pains wherewith it was accompanied. He died with the love of his murderers and confidence in God, in his heart and mouth. He ſuffered himſelf to be laid in the grave; but ſoon aroſe again out of it, left the earth,

earth, and visibly ascended into the regions of perfect bliss. They who were incapable of proving his doctrines, were able to assure themselves of the truth of his history: and he who was assured of this could not reasonably have any scruple to trust in him, but must believe him with unlimited faith.

Necessary as it is, that the grounds of our faith should be supported by reason, equally is it that its object should be so, or those doctrines and precepts which we are to believe on the authority of superior wisdom. That the doctrines of faith must not be repugnant to what are proved to be moral truths, or to the first principles of human knowledge, is too evident to be denied by any one. Thus in divine doctrines no such contradiction must appear as would set our faith at variance with reason. If one, who proclaims himself a messenger from God, should deliver doctrines that obscure, and render doubtful, the first principles of human knowledge, or totally overthrow them, all the grounds of human judgment, and consequently those on which he must build his claim to our faith would be entirely done away. If the use and application of our reason be incompatible with faith in his doctrines, we can believe nothing, or we cannot judge whether he deserve our confidence or not.

But it may here with justice be asked, how is it with doctrines that are confessed to be above the reach of the human understanding? However it may be with such doctrines, thus much seems incontestable, that such things are not to be included as are inconceivable, and which, though expressed in the words of a known language, convey no more meaning than if they were in a language unknown. Every one must admit, that such things are not objects of our faculty of conception. What a man can conceive must, at least, be capable of being clearly expressed. By the words: *doctrines above the reach of*

of the underſtanding, ſuch only are to be underſtood, the connection and dependance of which on the things to which they are conjoined, are not explicable by the knowledge it has acquired: propoſitions that appear to it to be ſeparate and iſolated in the regions of truth, as far as it is acquainted with them. But to form this judgment of them, the mind muſt comprehend the words, or they are non-entities to it. Suppoſing the exiſtence of certain abſtract ſpeculations, the premiſes of which are indiſcoverable to the human mind, and to which all its knowledge is inapplicable, be not palpably ſhewn, we might juſtly doubt, whether the promulgation of them could be uſeful to any purpoſe, and aſcribable to the Supreme Wiſdom. At any rate, they cannot be an effectual motive of action to man: for this would require that they ſhould diſcover to him, or at leaſt ſhew more clearly and certainly, ſome relation in which he ſtood to others, or in which others ſtood to him. But propoſitions that expreſs ſuch a relation cannot be altogether above the reach of man's underſtanding. As ſoon as a man underſtands the words, they diſplay ſome connection with advantage or diſadvantage; and, if he do not fully comprehend theſe in any given point of time, they cannot be abſolutely inſcrutable to his intellectual faculties. Even experience muſt gradually give him more light on the ſubject. Beſides, it ſeems to me that ſpeculations imparted to us by others to influence our actions, muſt in ſome degree admit of being united and interwoven with our general practical ideas and principles, with which their efficacy muſt coaleſce, ſo as to tend to the ſame, not to various points. Not that a man would become more learned and enlightened thereby; as an apt ſcholar in mathematics, if he were ſhewn the ſolution of a difficult and intricate problem, without its connection with what he had already learnt being pointed out, perhaps would.

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This might be an uſeful exerciſe of his faculties, if he were thereby excited to fill up the gap of the intermediate propoſitions, in order to diſcover the demonſtration himſelf, and employ it as a clue to guide his underſtanding. But this does not agree with the caſe above-mentioned. The promulgation of an unfathomable myſtery, whilſt it is and remains wholly unattainable to the human underſtanding, and whilſt in the circle of our knowledge there are no premiſes that conduct us to it, could give no exerciſe to reflection, and conſequently would not improve the mind. Hence it ſeems to me to follow, that abſtract metaphyſical truths, abſolutely above the reach of the human underſtanding, cannot be the ſubject of a revelation, or an object of rational faith, even if they could be rendered intelligible in words. But proportionally, and with reſpect to a certain ſtandard of man's intellectual faculties, and to the mode of thinking of certain perſons and times, there muſt be many true propoſitions above the reach of this or that man, and this or that period. If there have been divines who believed that they had met with ſuch unfathomable myſteries in the chriſtian revelation, probably they did not examine their nature with ſufficient care, or rightly underſtand the paſſages on which they founded them; or they ſought by reaſoning, or explanations, to open a way to them for their underſtanding, thus acknowledging, that even to themſelves a connection or harmony with known truths was an indiſpenſable quality of theſe myſteries. Be this as it may, it is however certain, that the chriſtian revelation, when it ſpeaks of myſteries, and myſteries revealed, underſtands facts and occurrences, which are not deducible from general ideas, or metaphyſical truths, but of the reality of which we are aſſured by our own experience, or by credible teſtimony. If we be informed of them, they muſt be revealed in a known language.

If

If they be capable of no proper demonſtration, ſtill, on the other hand, the abſurdity or impoſſibility of ſuch a fact or occurrence muſt not be deducible from any truth already demonſtrated. Were the latter the caſe, it would be juſtifiable, in ſuch a revelation, in other reſpects ſufficiently credible, to admit paſſages which ſeem to have ſuch ſignifications as not ſufficiently eſtabliſhed, as unintelligible, or as miſunderſtood, and exert ourſelves to diſcover the intelligible or true meaning, and if we could not ſucceed in this, to conſider ſuch paſſages as not written for us, or at leaſt not yet to be diſcloſed to us.

Reaſon, conſidered ſubjectively, or as a mean and inſtrument, has been diſtinguiſhed from objective reaſon, or the fundamental principles and truths of reaſon. It has been ſuppoſed that faith might thus be exalted above reaſon, and that thus they might be oppoſed to each other, without being deſtroyed. Admitting this diſtinction to be eſſentially true, reaſon cannot be employed as the inſtrument or means of explaining the ſenſe of any inſtruction, and diſtinguiſhing what is true from what is falſe, without admitting the grounds of all human knowledge, that is, logical truths, which are founded on the demonſtrated truths of ontology and pſychology. No human reaſon can, in any caſe, diſtinguiſh what is poſſible from what is impoſſible, truth from falſehood, probability from improbability, if it be not guided by general rules: which rules conſiſt of general, metaphyſical and logical truths. Thus, in practice, ſubjective and objective reaſon are inſeparable. Beſides, the human underſtanding cannot act otherwiſe than according to the laws of mind. Theſe laws require it to have aſſociated conceptions, and conſequently to endeavour to make the knowledge newly acquired, whether by experience, or imparted information, agree with the ſtock of ideas which it had

had already collected. This muſt more eſpecially be the caſe, if the newly acquired knowledge become an effectual principle of action. If, in our inquiries, we do not ſet out immediately from the firſt principles of knowledge, we muſt at leaſt ſuppoſe them to be already proved: and the more diſtant our inquiry from theſe firſt principles, or the more intermediate ideas and experience are required to connect them, the more extenſive the knowledge, and the more numerous the preparatory ideas that we muſt aſſume, if we would purſue our inquiry in a rational manner. The ſtudy of revealed religion ſeems to me to be no exception to this. Revealed religion preſuppoſes not only rational men, but demonſtrated rational truths, as, without theſe, no rational ſubject could be an object of thought, and, without theſe and their application, the meaning of any thing revealed could not be clearly perceived or determined, or we could not diſcover what it was intended to teach us. Any inſtruction, even though from God, if delivered in human words, may be miſconſtrued and miſapplied. To guard againſt ſuch miſconſtruction, and to diſcover the true and proper ſenſe of it, man has no help but reaſon. This however he cannot exerciſe, unleſs he confine himſelf to the rules of reaſoning rightly, and judge from truths already known.

This is obviouſly the caſe in paſſages that, literally taken, contradict each other: as when parts of the human body are attributed to God, and it is again ſaid, that he is a ſpirit, and that a ſpirit has neither fleſh nor blood: or when it is ſaid, that he has repented of ſomething, and again, that he is not a man that he ſhould repent. How ſhall we decide which of theſe expreſſions are to be taken in a literal ſenſe, when the ſcriptures do not plainly tell us that theſe are to be underſtood figuratively, and thoſe as ſtrictly true? Here the known principle of explaining

ing one paſſage by another is inapplicable, and unable to determine the doubtful meaning. The obvious contradiction renders it a party, and thus it can decide nothing. Nay, what is ſtill more, itſelf appeals to the deciſion of reaſon; and when it ſays, God cannot repent, as he is not a man, it refers to reaſon, and its principles and ideas of God and man, and wills it to compare theſe ideas, that from the compariſon it may perceive the juſtice of the aſſertion, that God cannot repent. But a reaſon as void of all ideas, principles, and fundamental truths, as unpractiſed in their application, would be as incapable of judging on this ſubject, as the raw and uncultivated underſtanding of a child, or a totally ignorant and unthinking man. Hence it is clear, that when reaſon determines in favour of the propoſition, that God is a ſpirit and cannot repent, it is done in conſequence of general principles, and rational notions of God and his nature. The ſame is it in caſes where the ſcriptures deliver apparently contradictory propoſitions, relative to man, his moral nature, converſion, amendment, or future reward and puniſhment. Thus it would ſeem from many paſſages, that the forgiveneſs of a ſinner, his acceptance with God, and his ſalvation, are arbitrary gifts of the Deity, not proportioned to the rectitude of his thoughts and actions, but founded on ſomewhat foreign and external to him. But then there are numerous other paſſages that ſay juſt the contrary; that man ſhall reap what he ſows, that every one ſhall receive according to his works, be they good or evil, and that he muſt forſake what is evil, and learn to do good, if he would obtain grace and forgiveneſs of God. That theſe and ſimilar paſſages apparently contradict each other, muſt be obvious to every one. But how ſhall we remove theſe contradictions? Who ſhall decide what we are to underſtand figuratively, what literally? Not the ſcriptures:

tures: as they do not ſay, this is ſpoken metaphorically, and that is ſimple truth. Reaſon then muſt be our ſole judge. But reaſon can judge only from what it has diſcovered to be true, by experience, and reflection on the nature of the human mind, and the laws of its alterations.

It may be ſaid, were reaſon ſo exalted, it would be totally inſuſceptible of inſtruction; and man could learn nothing by faith, or from revelation, which he might not acquire by his reaſon left to itſelf. This objection is, I think, already obviated, by what I have ſaid above of the nature of faith. It may not be ſuperfluous, however, to add a few obſervations. Speculative doctrines contrary to reaſon, if there be ſuch, cannot be imparted by revelation, or received and comprehended by reaſon. With reſpect to ſuch as are above reaſon, or which cannot be brought to harmonize with what man muſt know and acknowledge as truth, by any reflection, or by exerciſing the underſtanding to all eternity, the caſe is more doubtful. It is not probable indeed, that theſe ſhould be the object of faith, and the ſubject of a divine revelation, if the deſign of the revelation were to perfect the human mind and will, and if our faith were ſometime or other to be changed thereby into ſight. Facts, however, the promulgation of which has an influence on the peace and improvement of man, facts abſolutely undiſcoverable by reaſoning *a priori*; counſels and deſigns of God with reſpect to man, which, though perfectly conſonant to reaſon, that is, to a rational knowledge of God and man, were wholly unknown to the reaſon of this or that man, or at this or that period, or obſcurely, imperfectly, and not early enough known; in ſhort, practical truths which muſt be approved by reaſon, on ſerious and ſteady reflection, though not to be known as inconteſtably certain without the immediate and extraordinary aſſiſtance and inſtruction of God, may,

and

and muſt be, the ſubjects of divine revelation. Who will venture to deny, that they are a ſuitable object of it? Reaſon would believe ſuch a revelation as ſufficiently ſupported by divine authority, that is, would admit it as true, uſe, and apply it, till it became convinced of its utility by experience, and learnt to perceive by earneſt reflection how true it was, how worthy of the Deity from whom it came, how ſuitable to the nature, wants, and wiſhes of man, and how perfectly conſonant to his trueſt and beſt knowledge of things. If we liſten to reaſon, it is eaſy to perceive that we are far from knowing every thing neceſſary to our happineſs here and hereafter. We find that, in many caſes, we muſt act under the direction, and according to the inſtructions of others who know more than ourſelves. We feel that we muſt learn, and learn on, and that for this purpoſe we muſt admit and employ, on the authority of others, many things, the truth of which we cannot diſcover from our own ſtock of knowledge, till we increaſe in underſtanding, and become capable of walking without aſſiſtance. Should we not learn then from our wiſe and good Creator, ſhould we not truſt to his ſupreme authority, that what he reveals to us is true, good, and beneficial? How extremely fooliſh and abſurd would it be, to deſpiſe his inſtructions to ſalvation, becauſe they had not entered into our own minds! How ſenſeleſs not to wait with patience the time, when all his precepts and ordinances ſhall be juſtified to our reaſon, by a juſt application of them!

The duty and office of reaſon in general, with reſpect to a divine precept, may be conveniently explained, from the ſteps to be taken by the governor of a remote province, on receiving orders from his king, or by a judge, who hears the teſtimony of witneſſes, and is thence to diſcover the truth. The firſt will require from the meſſenger who brings

him the command a clear credential, and a ſufficient confirmation that he is actually ſent from the king. When he is aſſured of this, he will endeavour to underſtand the king's orders, and if they be in ſome paſſages doubtful and obſcure, he will carefully call to his aſſiſtance the rules of ſound criticiſm, and all the knowledge he has of the monarch's character, notions, and deſigns. If he be actually a wiſe and good king, he will not be diſpleaſed with his vicegerent for explaining paſſages that ſeem to him obſcure, contradictory to other paſſages, incompatible with the known character of the king, or militating againſt his deſigns, by other parts of his inſtructions that are more conſonant to his ideas of his maſter's thoughts. If he be no tyrant, and ſuppoſe and require from his delegates reaſon and conviction, he will not in ſuch a caſe expect the ſacrifice and renunciation of reaſon, but rather that it be applied with all poſſible attention. Thus, when the point is to prove whether that which is delivered to him as the king's command actually be ſo, or not, and alſo when he is to inquire how the command is to be underſtood, reaſon muſt be employed, and there occurs no oppoſition betwixt reaſon and faith. Different indeed would be the caſe, were the king an arbitrary deſpot; and differently muſt the viceroy act, were he conſcious that his maſter was accuſtomed to iſſue contradictory and futile commands. The more uſe he made of reaſon, the more would he gain the eſteem of a wiſe monarch. Let us ſuppoſe the caſe of the delivery of a divine revelation to be as if we were to hear and examine witneſſes, and thereby to judge of a certain important fact; ſhould we renounce reaſon, or ſet up faith as contradictory to it, we can think but little to the purpoſe. To judge whether the teſtimonies be admiſſible, or not, is evidently a duty of reaſon, and the proper occupation of it. It is equally impoſſible to deny, that reaſon muſt examine the words

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of the witneſſes, compare them with one another, ſift them, and thus diſcover the truth. On what grounds can any caſe be exempted from the inveſtigation and deciſion of reaſon, by means of which we arrive at the truth, and proper nature of facts? If an appeal be made to paſſages of ſcripture which ſet reaſon at nought, either they ſpeak not of pure and ſound reaſon, but of the underſtanding of men blinded by prejudices, who obey their paſſions, and liſten not to its dictates; or it is ſaid, as in that well known paſſage, according to which reaſon muſt commence under the direction of faith, that our reaſon muſt be convinced of the truth of divine doctrines and precepts by divine authority, and, in caſes where we are ignorant, and require to be enlightened by God, be aſſured of our ignorance, our need of divine inſtruction, and its utility and advantages. Beſides, this paſſage evidently ſpeaks of moral precepts, or doctrines that require to be obeyed. This is exactly the caſe where reaſon itſelf commands us to follow the wiſer and better views of God; and there muſt human reaſon be convinced, that not it, but the ſupreme reaſon of God muſt guide us by faith.

Let us apply this general theory of faith to the chriſtian in particular. Suppoſing its juſtice, it will, I hope, remove many difficulties, and throw the neceſſary light on the foregoing propoſition of our author. In the firſt place, it will be clear why faith in God, and Jeſus Chriſt, are ſo frequently and expreſsly required. However high and advantageous ideas we may form of the force and extent of human reaſon, theſe ideas would only hold of the maturer reaſon of the wiſer few. The greater part of mankind we muſt conſider as in a ſtate of childhood, embracing intelligible moral truths leſs from the exerciſe and application of their own mental faculties than on the authority of credible witneſſes, and conſequently through faith. When I conſider how

uncultivated, how unpractiſed, the underſtanding of moſt men is, and, according to the preſent ſtate of the world and of human life, muſt be, and how greatly they require a poſitive inſtruction and confirmation of the moral truths neceſſary to the peace and improvement of man; I cannot agree with thoſe divines, who conſider the diſcovery of abſolutely inſcrutable and incomprehenſible truths, or myſteries, in the theological ſenſe of the word, as indiſpenſable characteriſtics of a divine revelation. Surely a revelation would not be unworthy of the goodneſs of God, if it only imparted, and eſtabliſhed on unequivocal authority, inſtructive moral truths of importance to all mankind: nay, if it only diſcloſed ſome ſalutary counſel, which reaſon itſelf would hereafter have diſcovered, though not for ages; or if it corrected falſe principles, on which the world had hitherto built its grounds of conſolation, or its ſyſtem of moral duties.*

Should

* This, in my opinion holds good, particularly of the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate of retribution. This doctrine, unqueſtionably, was not unknown to mankind in the earlieſt ages, and ſeems ſo indiſpenſable to man's peace, and ſo deſirable to every mind, not wholly corrupted and depraved, that men willingly and eagerly embrace whatever has the leaſt appearance of ſupporting this doctrine. Thus men contented themſelves with the feeble and conjectural arguments of a Socrates and a Plato; or rather they wanted them not, at a period when they did not ſo much reaſon themſelves into a belief of it, as build their faith on the teſtimony of tradition, and certain obſcure perceptions which the mind felt of its immortality. But as the original ſimplicity of manners gradually diſappeared, free-thinking and depravity gained ground; when ſtronger and more generally inſtructive proofs became neceſſary to ſatisfy the ſceptic philoſopher, and convince the contemner of morals. Not long before the birth of Chriſt, theſe inquiries had been purſued ſo far, that men began to perceive the weakneſs and inſufficiency of the arguments adduced in ſupport of the immortality of the ſoul; but ſtill they were incapable of ſubſtituting more valid and powerful ones in their ſtead. In this intermediate ſtate, a belief

Should the divine revelation furniſh the occaſion of a great revolution, ſtill might I venture to determine how far it is conformable to the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, to impart it immediately to mankind. For the many, and even for the wiſer few, at leaſt in the gloomy hour of doubt, faith in the divine teſtimony will be partly an indiſpenſable, and partly an additional aſſurance of thoſe funda-

belief ſo indiſpenſable to the rendering man tranquil, and exciting him to virtue, appeared very doubtful to thinking minds.

The moſt virtuous of mankind, a Cato, a Brutus, who ſo ardently wiſhed that this doctrine might be true, were not ſufficiently convinced of it by the arguments of a Plato. How would they have rejoiced, how thankful would they have been, to have received a clearer light, and ſtronger confirmation on this ſubject! How muſt they have wiſhed to have been freed from their anxious doubts! This light, this confirmation, ſo ſuitable and neceſſary to the ſtate of the world at that time, the goſpel of Jeſus imparted to us. In this view, it could not have been promulgated at a more ſeaſonable time. Even amongſt the Jews, a very reſpectable ſect denied the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate of retribution; and the revelation of the Old Teſtament was ſo little calculated to oppoſe this continually ſpreading diſbelief, that the notion of a future ſtate, held by the other Jewiſh ſects, was not ſo much founded on this, as on tradition, and mere human authority. I muſt here obſerve, by the bye, that this conſideration throws ſome light on the queſtion, whether the chriſtian revelation has contributed to the moral improvement of the world, and in what degree. For were the civilized, poliſhed, and reaſoning part of the world, at the time of Chriſt's coming, in danger of utterly loſing this belief, which, as I will venture to affirm, is indiſpenſable both to the knowledge and exerciſe of man's general duties, and of falling into the moſt immoral free-thinking, and comfortleſs ſcepticiſm; chriſtianity, had it only prevented this extreme depravity, and been a powerful remedy againſt the abſolute want of religion accompanying it, would have been one of the beſt and moſt important gifts of God. With reſpect to this queſtion, as many of the partiſans of chriſtianity have already obſerved, we are to conſider not merely the poſitive improvements which it has introduced into the world, but alſo the many and great corruptions which it has prevented: not merely how much the practical principles and conduct of men have been corrected and improved by the chriſtian revelation, but how much worſe the world would have been, had it not been promulgated.

mental principles of religion, that there is a God, and that he will reward all who ſeek him. The more unpractiſed the human underſtanding in early ages, the more neceſſary was the principle of faith. Therefore God required it from his firſt worſhippers: therefore was ſo great a value ſet upon it, and it was imputed to Abraham as righteouſneſs. I cannot here omit an obſervation that particularly ſhews the neceſſity of religious faith. I muſt however refer back to what I have already ſaid on the too early exerciſe of the active powers of the mind, or propenſity to liberty, as a probable ground of moral evil. This early propenſity to liberty will determine a man in the choice of what is good or evil, before he has to guide him any knowledge, or judgment of them, or views derived from remembrance of the paſt, and a proſpect to the future. There is no remedy for this evil more powerful than faith, or a rational confidence in the knowledge of a wiſe and well-meaning guide. By this alone can the wild propenſity to liberty be reſtrained, and man's unbridled ſelf-will, his dangerous curioſity, his inquiſitive *wherefore*, and his inclination to extend his conceptions, be ſo fettered as to occaſion him the leaſt poſſible prejudice, though not forcibly ſuppreſſed. How completely would this be effected, if God gave mankind, in his ſon Jeſus Chriſt, a perfect and divine man as a competent guide, meriting their confidence by every thing capable of obtaining it from a rational being! In him then would they have an expreſs image of God, equal to their comprehenſion, a pattern of every excellence, and their leader in the path of perfection and happineſs.

Now if Jeſus Chriſt be ſuch a guide to man, and if, which appears to me to be the caſe, all the appellations given him in the ſcriptures, all the benefits he has bestowed on mankind, and all that he has done

done or ſuffered for them, be reducible to this idea,* it is eaſy to conceive that faith in him muſt be an active confidence, ſuch a confidence as a traveller, about to perform an unknown and dangerous journey, muſt have in a truſty and experienced guide. Evidently Chriſt our Saviour conducts us to a point, at which, without him, we could not arrive, or, at leaſt, not ſo eaſily, conveniently, and certainly; or he renders us capable of attaining a happineſs, by means of our faith in him, which otherwiſe we could not reach. But much as he may do for us, ſtill ſomething is left for ourſelves to perform. The high value of the ſervices he has done us, and his labours to promote our welfare, by no means exempt us from the duty of endeavouring after our own happineſs: and though he has rendered it poſſible for us to be happy in God, he has not removed the neceſſity of our carefully, ſincerely, and uninterruptedly treading in his ſteps, according to the inſtruction, encouragement, and ſupport that he has given, and will give us. Were it not ſo, we muſt preſume, that he meant to plunge our inclinations to good into a lethargic ſtupor, and quiet our minds under the dominion of ſin. *So were Chriſt the ſervant of ſin. God forbid.* So had he merely aſſured us of forgiveneſs, and brought us comfortable and joyful tidings, without requiring of us any application of them conducive to the increaſe of truth, righteouſneſs, and perfection, but rather ſuch as muſt prevent it. He would have imparted to us the hope of happineſs, and offered us the greateſt

* To guard againſt any miſconſtruction, as if I thus repreſented Jeſus merely as a teacher and pattern to the world, let me obſerve, that I hold him for a guide who makes imitation poſſible to his imitators, ſmooths the way for them, removes the obſtacles that might retard them, and in ſhort performs every thing neceſſary, that they who are led by him need only truſt in him, and ſteadfaſtly follow him, to obtain their end.

advantages, without making the abſolutely neceſſary qualification on the ſide of man a condition of the poſſeſſion of this happineſs, and of the enjoyment of theſe advantages. Thus the moſt perfect maſter muſt have ſought to lead his ſcholars to his happineſs indeed, but not to his virtues and perfection. As to believe this would be blaſpheming the holy Jeſus, and his ſervices to mankind, and as it is palpably repugnant to man's reaſon and nature, and to the aſſertions of Jeſus and his firſt diſciples, we dare not give ſo narrow a ſignification to faith in Chriſt, to which the happineſs imparted and inſured by him is promiſed, as to confine it to any one part of what he has done and ſuffered for us. However good, and apparently pious, the intention of the common limited definition of faith to ſalvation, that the blood and death of Chriſt conſtitute its ſole object, *it* appears to me expoſed to a miſconſtruction not unfrequent, and to an abuſe almoſt inevitable to the unthinking.* This makes it poſſible for many chriſtians to ſet their minds at peace, without thinking of amending their lives, or deeming it at all neceſſary. This, as I ſhall hereafter more fully ſhew, renders the tranſition from faith to good works, or to righteouſneſs, not leſs difficult in practice than in theory. This makes a chriſtian capable of ſaying: I have faith, and thou works.

Experience ſeems to me ſufficiently to ſhew that the pernicious conſequences above-mentioned ariſe from ſuch a confined notion of faith, and that the doctrine of juſtification and ſalvation by faith alone

* Let me not here be miſunderſtood. I am far from denying that the blood of Chriſt, which was ſhed for the ſins of the world, is an object, and indeed an important object of the faith to ſalvation. I only maintain that the object of this faith is not only the death of Jeſus, and the doctrines immediately relative to it, but alſo every other doctrine and precept of Jeſus and his apoſtles.

promotes

promotes ſuch unchriſtian abuſes; and every intelligent preacher, who attends to the way of thinking of his hearers, will find chriſtians enow who think in this manner, as a man whom I well know, and not one of the lower claſs, thought proper to explain his ſentiments in this manner, when exhorted to amend his life, and exerciſe the practical virtues of chriſtianity. But, ſaid he, if I muſt do all myſelf, what does it avail me, that Chriſt has done it? He has done it once for me, and payed my debt; why then ſhould I pay it again?—It may be replied, indeed, to chriſtians who think in this manner, that their faith muſt be active. But ſtill, if its proper eſſence, and whole value, be placed merely in the appropriation and acceptation of the ſacrifice of Chriſt, I do not ſee why good works, that are frequently ſo much depreciated, are abſolutely neceſſary; particularly, as on the common ſyſtem it cannot well be denied that a man, after a continued courſe of wickedneſs, may, at the end of his life, if he only accept the merits of Chriſt, and confidently believe that he has paid and performed every thing for him, be acquitted of his debt, and conſequently obtain forgiveneſs. Other motives to virtue, though good in themſelves, will be too weak to countervail the deep-rooted prejudice of the ſuperfluouſneſs of our good actions, and of faith in Chriſt being a ſufficient compenſation for them. Their power will be ſo much the leſs, as men commonly conceive their future happineſs to be ſomething poſitive, depending more on the arbitrary will of God, than the virtuous diſpoſition of the mind; and as the maxim, which cannot be too much or too carefully inculcated, that virtue itſelf is, and ever will be happineſs, is generally decried and abjured as atheiſtical. This probably is, becauſe the doctrine, that a mere confidence in the merits and virtues of another, or the wiſh to be juſtified by another, renders man capable of ſalvation, muſt fall to the

the ground, as ſoon as it is admitted to be true, that a virtuous mind is happy in every point of its exiſtence ſo far only as it has loved and practiſed doing good, and that a vicious mind muſt be puniſhed in every ſtate, in proportion as it has loved and exerciſed evil. Some endeavour here to avail themſelves of a diſtinction, and ſay: happineſs will be obtained only by means of faith, but degrees of it will be awarded in proportion as this faith diſplays itſelf in works. But whoever maintains this, muſt at leaſt preſume, that the point at which faith begins muſt have a preponderant tendency to good, that the mind of a believer muſt be converted from a predominant love of ſin to a ſuperior love of virtue, and that the crooked way muſt be left, and the ſtrait way entered upon, at leaſt a ſingle ſtep. In this ſtate the believer may be conſidered as a convaleſcent, who, now the criſis of his diſeaſe is paſt, begins to find himſelf ſomewhat eaſier and better.

That God may remit all poſitive puniſhments to ſuch a man, on account of his faith, is not utterly inconceivable. For as theſe relate to his former ſtate of unbelief, and would bring him to reflection and knowledge, being no longer neceſſary in his believing ſtate, at leaſt as far as they tended to this purpoſe, they might conſequently be remitted. But ſtill this is the loweſt degree of happineſs that can be aſcribed to him, unleſs ſomething poſitive or arbitrary be ſuppoſed, which, by a kind of miracle, has lifted him to a higher degree than his virtue has acquired, or could reach in ſo ſhort a time, and without the practice of any good work. If this be admitted, I ſee no reaſon why we may not admit every degree of happineſs to be equally arbitrary. If, however, it be rejected here, ſo it muſt in reſpect to happineſs on the whole. Beſides, happineſs itſelf cannot be conceived without the idea of ſome degree of it; and conſequently there is nothing contradictory

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in the ſuppoſition of its having degrees. Can any creature poſſeſs happineſs, without poſſeſſing it in ſome determinate degree? Now what holds of happineſs in general, holds of every degree of it, and *vice verſa*. Either happineſs in general, and every degree of it, is exactly proportional and adequate to the frame of men's minds and actions, or, in all its degrees, it is totally independant of a greater or leſs degree of righteouſneſs.

The difficulty of explaining how faith produces good works, and the ſcientific ſkill requiſite to do this, ſeem to be a conſiderable obſtacle with regard to practical chriſtianity to thoſe who poſſeſs not ſuch ſkill. This is openly avowed by a very celebrated and worthy divine of our church.* It muſt be allowed that it is difficult to ſhew, in a clear and convincing manner, that he who believes in Chriſt muſt, on account of this belief, feel himſelf bound to perform good works, and that his faith muſt lead him to the love and practice of what is good. It muſt be difficult to ſhew how faith and good works are connected, and how a man's inclination and promptitude to virtue are comprehenſible from that diſpoſition of the mind which we term faith. Thus the ideas of faith and good works muſt have no ſuch intimate connection, no ſuch clear and natural relation to each other, that we may infer one from the other, without the aid of one or more intermediate poſitions. Hence we muſt reprobate the notion of faith as the ſole neceſſary mean of righteouſneſs and ſalvation, in the common acceptation. Good works, or the exerciſe of moral virtue, will not here come into con-

* In Erneſti's *Neue Theol. Bibl. Band. I. Seite* 483, it is ſaid, "the author (the learned and acute Abbe Schubert) ſeems to be ſeduced by a deſire of demonſtrating how good works proceed from faith: a commendable attempt, indeed, but far more difficult than is imagined by thoſe who fancy they have ſucceeded in it."

ſideration:

ſideration: God does not conſider a man as righteous, or recompenſe him, becauſe he is juſt and good, but becauſe he believes in Chriſt. Such doctrine alone could give birth to the inviterate diſpute on the queſtion whether good works be neceſſary to ſalvation; and decide it ſo far at leaſt to their prejudice, as abſolutely to refuſe them all influence and relation to the forgiveneſs and juſtification of man. However, as the ſcriptures ſo frequently and expreſsly require the ſtate of good works, or virtuous thoughts and actions, in thoſe whoſe faith renders them objects of ſalvation, other motives are adduced as a kind of corrective, to prevent abuſes, and to make man earneſtly ſeek righteouſneſs. Thus it is ſaid, that good works are neceſſary as they are the fruits of faith, and in ſuch a manner, that without them our faith is dead. It is ſaid that good works are neceſſary to ſhew our thankfulneſs to God, and to our Redeemer, though the latter can have no weight with thoſe to whom it is moſt requiſite to demonſtrate the neceſſity of good works. Beſides, as thankfulneſs is itſelf a good work, this is ſaying nothing more than that a man muſt do good works, becauſe he muſt do good works. Neither does it appear to be a more powerful motive to ſay, that the ſtate of good works belongs to that order of things in which God makes us happy. For good works muſt belong to this order either as they are the fruits of faith, which is no new motive, being included in the firſt; or they belong to it as a particular and diſtinct part of ſalvation, independant of faith; which is contrary to the propoſition according to which faith is the ſole condition of ſalvation.

Thus if we would prove the neceſſity of good works, or ſharpen the incentives to righteous thoughts and actions, nothing remains but to betake ourſelves to the firſt ground, namely, that good works muſt naturally and neceſſarily follow a faith ſufficient

ſufficient to ſalvation. But to make this ground tenable, it is not ſufficient that we maintain the neceſſary connection betwixt faith and good works, but we muſt alſo prove it: it is not ſufficient that we declare a faith deſtitute of good works falſe and dead, but we muſt alſo deduce the neceſſity of good works, by juſt and clear concluſions, from the notion of faith. Theſe concluſions cannot eaſily be too clear and ſtriking. They muſt be capable of teaching every one to know what faith and good works are, and to compare theſe two ideas together. They concern the moſt important tranſition from knowing to performing, from theory to practice, and muſt be ſo clear and natural, that whoever thinks himſelf obliged to have faith muſt, by means of an infallible and inſeparable aſſociation of ideas, conceive himſelf obliged to good works, if he have a juſt idea of faith. Thus we may eſteem faith the ſole mean of ſalvation, without detriment to righteouſneſs and virtue, ſo far as it is the firſt principle and ſeed of moral good, and conſider it as that which conſtitutes man an object of acceptance with God. For if, where faith is, good works muſt neceſſarily and unavoidably follow; and if they to whom I preach faith, as ſoon as they know what it is, cannot doubt that they muſt alſo be good and virtuous, and actually begin to become ſo the inſtant they believe; the ſacred cauſe of virtue would receive no injury from ſuch a doctrine. But were it difficult to ſhew how good works proceed from faith, ſuch a doctrine would be eſſentially prejudicial to virtue. This difficulty includes alſo a practical one; that of evincing an active faith by love, or good works. If there be a gap betwixt faith and good works, with reſpect to the proof of the latter proceeding from the former, not eaſily to be filled up, there will be as great an one between them when applied to practice, which will be an obſtacle to the ready paſſage from one to the other.

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According to this poſition, it would be difficult for a chriſtian who ſhould rely on faith as the only condition neceſſary to ſalvation, to convince himſelf of its connection with good works, or of the indiſpenſable neceſſity of them. And who would venture to ſay, that this is not a real obſtacle to good works?

For the ſake of perſpicuity, I will throw together in few words what has been already ſaid. It is moſt clearly expreſſed in the ſcriptures that faith and good works muſt be united in them who would be ſaved. If any one aſk me: what ſhall I do to be ſaved? I may anſwer: believe and become righteous, that is, do good works. Thus I announce both as conditions equally neceſſary to ſalvation. It would be advantageous, in many reſpects, if I could ſhew the ſtrict connection of theſe two conditions; but it is not indiſpenſably neceſſary. For it is not leſs incumbent on us, as we hope for ſalvation, to exerciſe good works, becauſe we cannot ſhew how they proceed from faith. I might anſwer, indeed, by faith alone thou ſhalt become righteous, and be ſaved. But then I muſt ſo explain faith, that the origin of good works, or the obligation to them, and the capacity for them, ſhould be moſt clearly perceptible to him. If I cannot do this, my anſwer would be untrue and cenſurable; and if I can only perform it by means of much labour, ſkill, and ſcience, it would be defective.

I cannot apprehend that the idea I have given of faith is, in this reſpect, open to objection. I do not think one better adapted to practice can be contrived. But is it actually the idea of the holy ſcriptures, and not of philoſophy? In the firſt place, it ſeems to me to be ſupported by Chriſt's ſaying to Thomas: bleſſed are they that have not ſeen, and yet have believed. For hence it appears, according to my opinion, that confidence belongs to faith, and indeed confidence in the authority of a ſuperior knowledge,

ledge, and its teſtimony. But Paul tells us that faith, in the proper ſenſe of the word, ſo far as it is diſtinguiſhed from what is held to be true, is juſtly oppoſed to ſeeing, either with the eyes, or with the underſtanding. *We walk by faith, not by ſight*, 2 Cor. v. 7. This is alſo confirmed by the definition of faith, Heb. xi. 1. *Now faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen.* If faith be the ſubſtance, or ground of hope, it muſt be produced by the actual ſight of the thing hoped for, by reaſoning and our proper knowledge, or by the credible teſtimony of another. But that the latter is the caſe here, and that conſequently the apoſtle underſtands by faith a conviction of things unſeen, founded not on our own diſcovery, but on the aſſertions of a credible witneſs, and ariſing from our confidence in him, appears to me altogether inconteſtable: more eſpecially, if, as what precedes and what follows ſeem to indicate, we are not to underſtand by the unſeen things hoped for the happineſs of a future ſtate, which might, in ſome meaſure, be previouſly diſcoverable by the light of reaſon, but approaching liberations from temporal oppreſſions and perſecutions. For theſe the chriſtians could hope on no other grounds than their truſt in the promiſes of Jeſus, and only ſo far as they relied on his word: thus confidence is here the principal idea of faith. This clearly appears, too, in all the inſtances of faith ſubſequently adduced by the apoſtle, particularly in what is ſaid of Abraham, ver. 8. *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.* He muſt have had an abſolute reliance, then, on the promiſes of God. Still more clearly is it expreſſed of Sara, ver. 11. *Through faith alſo Sara herſelf received ſtrength to conceive ſeed, and was delivered of a child when ſhe was paſt age, becauſe ſhe judged him faithful who had promiſed.* Of Abraham it is ſaid,

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ver. 17. that *he offered up Iſaac by faith*; and ver. 19. *accounting that God was able to raiſe him up, even from the dead.* Theſe are ſufficient examples of faith without ſight or knowledge, in which the believers held ſomething to be true, through confidence in the power, wiſdom, and goodneſs of God, which they had not ſeen, and which in their judgment muſt have appeared moſt improbable.

Though of the things which Chriſt has teſtified to us, either by his word, or by his actions and ſufferings, there are many that may be conjectured or inferred by reaſon, and which therefore, as it ſeems, we do not properly believe, or deem to be true from confidence in his word; ſo that the term *faith* is not ſtrictly applicable to them: let it ſtill be remembered that they are, and will remain objects of faith to the greater part of mankind, and muſt be believed by all who have not cultivated and exerciſed their reaſon, through confidence in credible teſtimony. This is no objection to my idea and uſe of the word faith. The queſtion is not what is capable of being diſcovered by reaſon, but what actually has been, or will be, by that of the majority of mankind. It is a moſt ineſtimable benefit of God, and a ſervice for which we can never be ſufficiently thankful to Chriſt, that the important truths of God's paternal affection to man, of a future life, &c. which ſome few philoſophers might have diſcovered by the help of reaſon, with more or leſs certainty, but which the far greater number of men would have remained ignorant of, or muſt have believed on ſlight authority, are, by means of a rational and well-founded faith, known to all, and rendered inſtruments of their improvement and conſolation. Thoſe important doctrines, which otherwiſe would have found a place in the religion of a few true philoſophers at moſt, may now be known by thoſe who are no philoſophers, and received into the

the eſtabliſhed ſyſtems of religion of whole nations, not weakened and disfigured by fables, not reſting on doubtful traditions, but clad in their original purity, and ſupported by rational principles.

The moſt ſpecious objection that can be made to the orthodoxy of my idea of faith, and which has actually been made by an ingenious friend of mine, is taken from the oppoſition betwixt faith and the law, betwixt the Moſaic and Chriſtian diſpenſations, which occurs in different parts of St. Paul's Epiſtles, and particularly Galatians iii. If faith, obſerved my friend, be a confidence in the judgment of a ſuperior guide, under the law it muſt have applied eminently to the Iſraelites, who were led by Moſes. How then can the law be oppoſed to faith, or the Moſaic diſpenſation to the Chriſtian, as the principle of faith was equally neceſſary in both, and the Iſraelites were led by faith in Moſes, as the Chriſtians by faith in Chriſt?

Before I proceed to explain the paſſage on which this objection is chiefly grounded, permit me to obſerve that it does not follow from the apoſtle's oppoſing them to each other, that faith and the law are totally diſcrepant, and exclude each other, and that faith could not poſſibly ſubſiſt under the law. This oppoſition the apoſtle took from the notions and opinions of the Jews, with whom he was diſputing. They had made a diſtinction betwixt faith and the law; and it ſeems to me that St. Paul, in his diſpute with them, took up his ground on their miſtaken ideas, and not on the true nature of the caſe. For it is undeniable that obedience to the law, delivered from mount Sinai, was leſs founded on the proper knowledge of its followers, than was obedience to the precepts of the goſpel. Still that faith, that filial confidence which the goſpel requires of its followers, in God as their father, in Jeſus Chriſt his ſon, and in their elder and wiſer

brethren, who were ſent forth to bring them into the right way, is not the ſame as the proper principle of obedience with the Jews. This appears, as I think, from the reproof which our Saviour gave the ſcribes and phariſees, Matt. xxiii. that, in all their ſcrupulous punctuality in fulfilling the letter of the law, they omitted *the weightieſt matters*, namely judgment, mercy, and *faith*. In my opinion, the word faith here very well admits its uſual ſignification, but by judgment we may underſtand either the virtue of juſtice, or judging rightly of things in the mind. Either will give the paſſage a good ſenſe, and agree with the context. Ye obſerve the letter of the law with the moſt ſervile and ſcrupulous exactneſs, in the moſt inſignificant trifles: but ye omit the moſt important matters. Moral virtue, which conſiſts in juſtice and mercy to your neighbour, and faith in God, which is the principle of all virtue and obedience, are wholly unheeded by you. Or, if judgment be rendered the act of judging rightly, the ſenſe will be: in your blind and ſervile obedience ye neglect ſound judgment, &c. It is certain that the Jews did not found their obedience to the law on a rational faith, and a filial truſt in God. They diſunited faith and the law, by ſeparating an outward obedience from that its proper principle, by making the ſign or external ceremonies of it the *opus operatum*, looking more to theſe ceremonies than to the intent from which they flowed, exalting a blind ſuperſtitious conformity to the rank of proper merit, forming no rational general plan of the whole of the obedience required by God to his commands, and thus, like ignorant ſlaves, ſuffering themſelves to be guided by the bare letter of the ordinances given them, without paying the leaſt attention to the general ſpirit of the law. They preferred every particular act of the law to its grand deſign: expected the reward of their blind and irrational obedience,

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more as an arbitrary recompenſe of each particular external act of it, than as a natural conſequence of a juſtneſs of ſentiment, or of the faith from which it proceeded, to which it led, and in which it ſhould be exerciſed; and, conſequently, ſhewed more obedience to the poſitive, than to the proper moral precepts: in ſhort, they ſubſtituted ſuperſtition inſtead of faith. Taking it for granted that this was the way of thinking of the Jews, I conſider the apoſtle's diſpute with thoſe who embraced the Jewiſh notions, as the conteſt of reaſon againſt ſuperſtition: and thence I explain his oppoſing faith to the law. For with reſpect to men, who thought as the Jewiſh opponents of the apoſtle in my opinion did, faith and the law were actually oppoſites to each other, and he who would diſpute with them ſucceſsfully, muſt conſider the caſe in their point of view. We will now proceed to examine whether, on this ſuppoſition, the words of the apoſtle afford a natural and apt ſenſe, and were adapted to the purpoſe of refuting his antagoniſts.

Let it be remembered, that the grand point which the apoſtle had to ſubvert was this: the goſpel is unneceſſary, and of no uſe; it is a ſuperfluous innovation, as we may and muſt be righteous and ſaved by the law. Now it was an adroit, yet innocent artifice of the apoſtle, in his controverſy, to ſubſtitute, inſtead of the faith of the goſpel a diſputable word, and ſuſpicious to the Jews on account of its novelty, that which they already knew from the Old Teſtament, which ſignified ſomething the value, power, and efficacy of which they could not deny, as they muſt admit that Abraham was juſtified by faith, and that before the giving of the law it was the ſole mean of obtaining juſtification. Hence it is natural for us to expect that Paul, to make the greateſt poſſible uſe of this advantageous ſubſtitution of terms and ideas, would endeavour to unite and

combine the ideas of faith and the goſpel, and ſo to modify the general idea of faith, that it might moſt eminently apply to it, and be preciſely determined by it; and on the other hand, that he would place the difference and contraſt between the law and the goſpel, or faith, in the ſtrongeſt light. The more he could do this with an aſſurance of truth, the more his cauſe gained; and what he was able to maintain, and to prove againſt his antagoniſts, from the teſtimony of the Old Teſtament, in favour of faith in general, and of Abraham's in particular, he might apply to the advantage of the goſpel. He reaſoned, perhaps, in this manner. The deciſion of the queſtion between us, whether a man can be juſtified and ſaved by the law, or another divine inſtruction be neceſſary, depends on the deciſion of another queſtion, namely, whether faith be a neceſſary efficacious mean ordained by God for obtaining acceptance with him. But that faith is ſo appears from this, that Abraham was juſtified by it alone, without the law, and that God required of him nothing but faith, that is, truſt in his promiſes, and ſubmiſſion to his guidance, imputing this faith to him as righteouſneſs. But they ſay, the law was given to us: yet, if faith alone were the inſtrument of juſtification, without the law, to what purpoſe does this ſerve?

To this the apoſtle anſwers in the words on which the objection is chiefly founded. *But before faith came, we were kept under the law, ſhut up unto the faith which ſhould afterwards be revealed*, Gal. iii. 23. He ſhews that the promiſes of God, and the ordinance of faith pertaining to them, were not removed by the intervention of the law: that the law, if rightly applied, prepared and led its rational and juſt obſervers to faith; and indeed to ſuch an enlightened, reaſonable, and filial faith as Abraham diſplayed, and as the goſpel diſpenſation required: that the law, if ſeparated from faith, and ſo conſidered

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and applied as it was by the Jews, could only kill, or announce damnation: that ſuch an obſervation of the law as the Jews held out could be of no avail: and that he who would be accepted by God, juſtified and ſaved, under the law, muſt unite faith with it, or his obedience muſt flow from a filial confidence in God, and be productive of righteouſneſs. Now all that the apoſtle proved in ſupport of the neceſſity and importance of faith, tended equally to ſupport the goſpel diſpenſation; as in fact the old ordinance of faith, which had been obſcured and miſconceived under the law, was only renewed by the goſpel, though renewed and confirmed with more clearneſs, and a more preciſe eſtabliſhment of the object in whom we ſhould truſt, and the promiſes which we were to believe.

But more particularly to explain the words of the apoſtle, Gal. iii. ſo far as they relate immediately to our purpoſe. The Galatians had departed from the goſpel to follow the law, or at leaſt were in danger of it. Paul repreſents to them, that through faith they were the children of Abraham; but that they muſt inherit the promiſes, through an imitation of that faith by which he inherited them. Ver. 7, 8, 9. *Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the ſame are the children of Abraham. And the ſcripture, foreſeeing that God would juſtify the heathen through faith, preached before the goſpel unto Abraham,* ſaying, *in thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed. So then they which be of faith are bleſſed with faithful Abraham.* The law (as you ſee and obſerve it) denounces a curſe; and whoever is ſo under the law, as you Jews are, to do the works of the law without faith, cannot be juſtified. *For the juſt ſhall live by faith:* that is, he ſhall owe his juſtification and ſalvation to his faith, or the rectitude of his opinions towards God. *The law is not of faith,* ver. 12. that is, the law, as you conſider it, confined to mere exter-

nal acts of obedience, leads not to faith, not to an inward frame of heart and mind, but ſimply to obedience, or to matter of fact, for ſo I underſtand the words ſtrictly, "the man that *doeth* them ſhall live in them, ver. 12. *If the inheritance* be *of the law*, it is *no more of promiſe*, ver. 18. Faith relates to a promiſe, which it preſuppoſes: but a promiſe out of free grace, was unneceſſary, if the inheritance were a merited recompenſe and ſalary for the obſervance of the law. Therefore, the apoſtle infers, the inheritance came by promiſe, and this promiſe ſuppoſes and requires faith. *Wherefore then* ſerveth *the law?* ver. 19. A very ſeaſonable queſtion, to which the apoſtle here gives a ſhort reply, anſwering it afterwards more fully. *It was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions:* it relates to the ſinful and corrupt ſtate of mankind. The uncultivated brutal ignorance, immorality, and wickedneſs of the world rendered ſuch an ordinance neceſſary in the interim, to make men moral, and to ſhew them the difference between good and evil, right and wrong, in a manner adequate to their unpractiſed underſtandings, and capable of being comprehended by them, *—till the ſeed ſhould come to whom the promiſe was made,*—till that great teacher, guide, and benefactor of mankind, with whom the promiſe was connected, ſhould appear, and his appearance could be productive of advantageous and happy conſequences. Is *the law then againſt the promiſes of God?* ver. 21. Or ſhould the original ſyſtem of God, the leading man to wiſdom, virtue, and happineſs, through faith in a divine guide, be annulled by this intervening ordinance? *God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law.* But this actually would have been the caſe, could the intervening law, as it gave moral inſtructions, have imparted the will, the power, and the capacity for fulfilling that ſyſtem, and thus

thus obtaining life. If it really could excite a virtuous frame of mind, a filial diſpoſition to obey God, and a life of virtue, righteouſneſs, or a juſt and happy conſtitution of man, acceptable to God, would have come by the law. Such a power, however, the law poſſeſſed not, or at leaſt had never diſplayed. *The ſcripture hath concluded all under ſin, that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe*, ver. 22.

The ſcripture, or the law, teaches us only what is right, and what is wrong, making known a number of offences, to the end that we, condemned as ſinners by the law, ſhould not expect our juſtification from the law, or from our obſervance of it (as it is impoſſible for us to fulfil it perfectly) but ſimply from the promiſe, and from an active effectual truſt in the promiſe. *But before faith came*, ver. 23. before the divine ordinance, which was to lead man to true juſtification and ſalvation through a filial confidence, and which we muſt ſuppoſe to have been enveloped and concealed under the maſs of external commandments and ordinances, was brought to light, and fully revealed, *we were kept under the law, ſhut up unto the faith which ſhould afterwards be revealed* — held, as it were, in a kind of ſlavery and bondage, that we might not fail of that end to which we were appointed, but to which we were yet incapable of being openly and directly led, on account of our infant ſtate. *Wherefore the law was our ſchoolmaſter* to bring us *unto Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith*, ver. 24. Both here and elſewhere they who were under the law are repreſented by the apoſtle as children, in a ſtate of pupillage (between whom and ſlaves there is no difference) as they were under the ſtrict eye of a maſter, who muſt watch and guide their every ſtep, and not left to themſelves. This ſtate of pupillage, indeed, is not altogether unlike the ſtate of thoſe who are led by faith: it

differs from it, however, as that of children wholly untutored, from that of children ſomewhat grown up. The former muſt conſtantly be led by the hand, under the maſter's eye; no general principle of action can yet be held out to them, no general precept including many caſes can yet be given them, but in every particular inſtance they muſt be told, as the Jews were by the law, do this, touch not that, &c. The latter, it is true, muſt alſo be led, and ſupply the deficiencies of their own knowledge, by a confidence in that of others: but they are now worthy of ſtanding in their Father's ſight, and are capable of receiving general principles of action. They have ſufficient judgment to know that they muſt ſuffer themſelves rationally to be guided to their good through a truſt in their Father. General precepts may now be given them, and more of the wiſe and affectionate purpoſes of their Father may be laid open to them, as their underſtanding has acquired a certain degree of maturity. They are no longer to be governed as the infants (the Iſraelites under the law) by the immediate and inſtant impreſſions of hope and fear, but by the proſpect of future pleaſures and pains, and diſtant happineſs or unhappineſs. They are capable of the noble ſentiments of gratitude, reciprocal love, and true filial confidence, which cannot well take place in infants.

This is the ſtate attained by the believing chriſtian, and ſo ſtrikingly different from the ſtate under the law, that though a certain faith be deemed neceſſary under the Moſaic diſpenſation, it is no way to be compared with that required by chriſtianity. (Let it be obſerved that the majority of the Iſraelites are here ſpoken of, for the more eſpecial friends of God, a Moſes, an Aſaph, a David, and ſome others, had already that faith which a chriſtian ſhould have, with reſpect to its nature at leaſt, though the knowledge of its object was not ſo fully unfolded to them.)

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The faith under the law was that of an infant, or ſlave, to his preceptor, or maſter, founded chiefly on fear: the faith of the chriſtian is a rational confidence in a Father, and in an affectionate guide given him by that Father, founded on gratitude, and reciprocal love.

Notwithſtanding this difference, the faith under the law, that blind and ſlaviſh rather than enlightened and filial faith, was an introduction to the rational and filial religion of the goſpel. This introduction was made cautiouſly and preparatorily in the following manner. In the firſt place, as mankind, and particularly the Jews, were yet too feeble to be led to fulfil the purpoſes of God by a rational and filial faith, this intermediate ſtate was neceſſary to teach them morality, and give them ſtrong religious impreſſions of right and wrong. It was neceſſary to awaken in them an attention to the different conſequences of various thoughts and actions, that they might regulate their conduct by an attention to thoſe conſequences. In the ſecond place, it was neceſſary to keep weak and ignorant men under wholeſome reſtraint, that they might not fall into brutal ignorance, atheiſm, and a denial of Providence, or into wild and diſſolute ſuperſtition and polytheiſm. This the apoſtle particularly points out by the appellation of a ſchoolmaſter. Thirdly, whilſt the law, ever threatening, noticed ſin by its ordinances, and particularly by its ſin and treſpaſs-offerings,* denouncing as criminal errors, or failings, partly unavoidable, partly not puniſhable as civil offences, it was eſtabliſhed as a ſymbolical leſſon, adapted to the underſtandings of mankind at that period, to teach them the effects,

* Theſe ſin and treſpaſs-offerings, ſetting aſide their typical nature, ſeem to have been chiefly a kind of eccleſiaſtical penance, by undergoing which the offender was excuſed from a ſlight ban, or excommunication.

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guilt, and perniciouſneſs of the ſlighteſt tranſgreſſion. Thus, whilſt it was appointed to teach men the exiſtence of ſin, it prepared them for a more ready reception of Chriſt, and his doctrine of penitence and forgiveneſs of ſins.

Let us ſuppoſe that men had no idea, or at moſt a very confined and imperfect one, of morality, and of the guilt and perniciouſneſs of immoral conduct, acknowledging perhaps only ſome extremely great crimes as injurious and deſerving puniſhment; they muſt neceſſarily be more cold to the enunciation of grace and forgiveneſs, which in their opinion they did not want, more inſenſible to the call to amend their thoughts and actions, and diſpoſed to conſider the goſpel requiſites to ſalvation as extremely rigid and overſtrained. Here holds the ſaying of the apoſtle: *the natural man*, that is the merely ſenſual, uninſtructed, uncultivated man, whether on account of any thing that may be deemed his own fault, or of the circumſtances in which he is placed, *received not the things of the ſpirit of God: for they are fooliſhneſs unto him: neither can he know* them. An underſtanding cultivated and enlightened, in a certain degree, is neceſſary to a rational conviction of the truths of chriſtianity. *Becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned:* they muſt be judged by reaſon. On this account I am inclined to believe it is that the Malabars, North Americans, Hottentots, and other wholly uncivilized nations are ſo deaf to the preaching of the goſpel: though I do not conſider it as the ſole cauſe of the difficulty, nay almoſt impoſſibility, of convincing them of the truths of chriſtianity in a rational manner. They want that degree of cultivation neceſſary to their finding the goſpel worthy of acceptance on rational grounds. How far the more civilized nations, as the Greeks and Romans that were converted to chriſtianity when the goſpel was firſt preached, were prepared, and received the neceſſary

neceſſary ſuſceptibility of the pure and rational religion of Jeſus by other diſpenſations of the Divine Providence, I ſhall not here inquire, as it would carry me too far. Still it appears to me probable that the benevolent and impartial Father of mankind did not leave them without ſome means to this purpoſe, making up to them the want of the Moſaic diſpenſation and inſtruction by other preparatory helps, ſo far at leaſt that they alſo might receive the roots of chriſtianity; as it is declared that the heathen have fellowſhip in the goſpel, and that chriſtianity ſhould be the religion of all men, not of a particular people, or a national religion, as all at that time known were. Thus the ſtock of the tree, the branches of which were gradually to overſhadow the whole earth, after its inhabitants, by the cultivation of their reaſon and morals, were become capable and worthy of enjoying its wholeſome fruit, and refreſhing themſelves under its grateful ſhade, muſt at leaſt have been capable of being planted amongſt the heathen.

Laſtly, This ſtate of pupillage under the law, wherein the Iſraelites were confined to a ſlaviſh obedience, and tied down by the whole of their religious ſyſtem to blind ſubmiſſion, whilſt every thing was preſcribed to them, and nothing left to their own judgment, prepared them for a ſtate, in which obedience it is true was required, yet not the obedience of a ſlave, but of a child, who obeys from confidence in a wiſe and affectionate father; who obeys, becauſe he is aware that his obedience is neceſſary and advantageous to him; who obeys, becauſe he perceives that this filial obedience and confidence in his father's commands are the beſt and only means of augmenting and extending his virtue, knowledge and happineſs. In this view the law may be compared with the difficult and laborious exerciſes impoſed on the learner of any art, in which he is left

left to ſurmount greater difficulties than occur in actual practice, that his abilities may be rendered capable of the greateſt exertions. In this view perhaps it was that Jeſus termed his religious ſyſtem an eaſier yoke, and a lighter burden, compared with the yoke of ceremonies, and the weight of ordinances under the law: and the apoſtle repreſents the chriſtians who are freed from it as perſons arrived at a ſtate of reſt.

Let me alſo obſerve that, in my opinion, the apoſtle Paul, when he ſpeaks of the Moſaic diſpenſation, with all its rites and injunctions, as a ſhadow of what was to be, the ſubſtance of which was in Jeſus, and on this ground urges the abolition of the law, meant principally that the religion of Moſes was a preparation and introduction to the more perfect religion of Chriſt, in the manner above related. At leaſt the ordinances relative to unclean meats, new moons and ſabbaths, could not properly be ſo deemed in any other ſenſe. And as it is ſo clearly ſaid that theſe were ſhadows of a future ſubſtance, we may preſume from analogy that all the reſt of the Moſaic ordinances could not be ſo in a more exalted or efficacious ſignification. How far the ſacrifices were an exception to this, and, conſidered as types, were preparatory in a higher ſenſe, I will not at preſent take upon me to determine.

From the explanation I have given of the words of the apoſtle that have been objected to me, it appears to me, that, far from contradicting my idea of faith, they tend to confirm it. But, whilſt I make confidence the firſt and original idea of faith, I by no means deny that in the apoſtolical writings faith often implies the general belief and practice of chriſtianity. My endeavour has been rather to ſhew in what manner the word faith muſt have acquired this general ſignification, by means of a juſt connection with its original more limited one. Neither have I

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the leaſt doubt, but this developement of the idea will enable any one to underſtand aright every particular paſſage in the writings of Paul, where faith and the law occur in oppoſition to each other.

If it be aſked, what truths are properly the objects of a chriſtian's faith; I would anſwer, that, from the nature and deſign of chriſtianity; all thoſe truths, in an eſpecial if not excluſive ſenſe, appear to be ſo, the knowledge of which makes us capable, fit, and ready to receive Chriſt as our guide to conduct us to God, to religious virtue, and to true happineſs, giving ourſelves up to his direction, and following his inſtructions. Firſt of all, then, they include all that we muſt ſuppoſe of Jeſus to confide in him as a truſty and divine guide, and every thing by which he has confirmed his claim to our confidence. What theſe things are I have already pointed out, when ſpeaking of the rational grounds of faith. As he has aſſerted that he was ſent by God to man, with full powers and authority, to be the light and life of the world, for which purpoſes he announced himſelf, we have only to admit the truth of his aſſertion on rational grounds. If this be the caſe, an exact and perfect knowledge of the exalted and myſterious relation he bears to our heavenly Father is not *abſolutely neceſſary*, to oblige us to the ſtricteſt exerciſe of that in which he frequently makes the whole duty of his followers to conſiſt, the hearkening to his voice, and keeping his word. I will not preſume to ſay that, if we were capable of diſcovering ſomething more clear and accurate reſpecting that relation, and it could be made intelligible to us by juſt images, or analogous and proper expreſſions, it would not tend, not to the ſatisfaction of a laudable curioſity merely, but to the ſtrengthening of our faith in him, and increaſe of our reverence for him. It may be a duty, therefore, for thoſe who have capacity and leiſure enough, to enter on this deep and myſterious

myſterious inveſtigation, that they may extend their knowledge by a diligent and humble inquiry. But I once more repeat that is not in my opinion, *abſolutely neceſſary* to our believing in Jeſus, and being ſaved through him, that we ſhould have a perfect, clear, and determinate conception of his proper nature; if we but know in what relation he ſtands to us; and if we but thoroughly believe that he is endowed with divine wiſdom, virtue, and power ſufficient to accompliſh what he was to perform for us, and that we muſt hearken to him as we would hearken to God, and ſo honour the Son as we would honour the Father. And this, I think, is ſo clearly and frequently ſaid in the New Teſtament, that we muſt deem it a divine teſtimony of Jeſus, and believe it on that teſtimony, though we cannot attain to this conviction by inquiring into the nature of Jeſus, an inquiry beſtrewed with metaphyſical ſubtilties, whilſt after all, as others have already obſerved,* it gives no more certainty or ſatisfaction with reſpect to our juſtification, than the mere belief in the abovementioned teſtimonies of God concerning Jeſus, as whatever we infer relative to his nature muſt be in like manner founded on teſtimonies of ſcripture, and not derived from logical truths.

If then ſuch ſpeculative queſtions and diſputes may be ſet aſide, without detriment to the practical religion of Jeſus, I would divide the doctrines and truths which form the proper object of chriſtian faith into thoſe which deſcribe to us and elucidate the ſentiments, virtues, and perfections of chriſtianity,

* See the excellent tract on the utility of the office of a preacher, and the qualifications for it, *Ueber die Nutzbarkeit des Predigamts, und deren Beforderung*, S. 146. where it is ſaid: "after all my notions concerning the perſon of Chriſt, I muſt at laſt rely on the teſtimony of the holy ſcriptures (ſuppoſing that my notions actually agree with them) as I before relied on the promiſes of the goſpel for the forgiveneſs of my ſins."

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and thoſe which include all the motives or inducements we have to endeavour after thoſe ſentiments, virtues, and perfections. To the firſt claſs belong all the commands and precepts given us by Chriſt, partly in expreſs words, partly in his conduct and example, which, as he was the declared image of God, have to us the force of laws. Though many of theſe precepts were ſuch as might have been, and actually were, diſcovered by the reaſon of many philoſophers unclouded by prejudice, both before and at the time of Chriſt's appearance, yet there were ſeveral, ſuch for inſtance as thoſe relative to purity of deſires and manners, love of our enemies, &c. which he firſt announced. Thus theſe were objects of faith to the wiſer few, as well as to the many, whoſe uncultivated underſtandings could embrace ſcarcely any part of morality except through faith.

With reſpect to thoſe of the ſecond claſs, many diſcordant notions prevail amongſt chriſtians. In my opinion, however, they might eaſily be reconciled, or, at leaſt, the diſputes concerning them would be conducted with leſs heat and animoſity, if all were agreed on the principle that theſe truths have no intrinſic value and importance, but are ſo far valuable only as they are motives and aids to chriſtian rectitude. If this be admitted, it is clear that, according to the diſpoſitions and different ways of thinking of men, this or that notion of Chriſt's merits towards us will make an impreſſion on one, which it will not on another; and this or that ſuppoſition would produce an effect in one, of which in another it would fail. To make this clear by an example, which relates to the point in queſtion: he who conſiders his former diſobedience to the commandments of God as an immediate offence to his divine majeſty, and indeed an offence infinite in degree, may conſider faith in a proper atonement of the offended and wrathful

wrathful Deity by the blood of Jeſus neceſſary to a peaceful aſſurance of forgiveneſs. Now it is obvious that, whilſt he thinks the former, he muſt believe the latter, in order to be at peace, and to have courage to ſet about a freſh obedience. Thus it ſhould ſeem the Jews, at the time of the apoſtles, who were accuſtomed to bloody ſacrifices, and conſidered the principle of the law, that there was *no* forgiveneſs without ſhedding of blood, as an eternal and immutable principle of God's government, might be ſooner reconciled to chriſtianity, by which all ſacrifices were aboliſhed, when the apoſtle repreſented to them the death of Jeſus, which he ſuffered for the good of mankind, and on account of *their* ſins, and which was in this view a ſacrifice, as the great treſpaſs-offering, by which all was at *once* accompliſhed.*

On the other hand, if a man conceive ſin and diſobedience to be not ſo properly an offence againſt the immutable, all-ſufficient, and ever bleſſed God, as a real calamity to the ſinner, and an offence againſt himſelf: if his idea of the puniſhments of God be, that they are of no ſervice to maintain the divine majeſty, or ſatisfy his vindictive juſtice, repreſented too much like that of frail man, but that they are

* Very different is it in this reſpect with the Jews of our days. As they have long deſiſted from offering up ſacrifices, and this part of their worſhip is fallen into diſuſe, they can no longer deem ſacrifices an indiſpenſable condition of the remiſſion of ſins. Hence repreſenting to them that Jeſus was the great ſin-offering for the offences of mankind does not make an impreſſion upon their minds advantageous to chriſtianity, as they perceive not the neceſſity of ſuch an offering. They believe that God can and will forgive ſins, without being moved to it by a ſin-offering, from his inexhauſtible mercy. To this, and not to any ſacrifice, they think they muſt have recourſe. Thus the repreſentation of the death of Jeſus as a proper atonement to divine vengeance is ſo far from being calculated to render chriſtianity more pleaſing and acceptable to the preſent Jews, that it tends rather to confirm all their prejudices againſt it.

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ordered, and neceſſarily ordered by infinite goodneſs, for the benefit of ſinful man, to warn him of his errors, and recall him from them, and conſequently are to be conſidered as means, not as ends: he may conſider the death of Jeſus as neceſſary, but only on this account that God might give us a firm aſſurance of his readineſs to forgive ſins, and excite us to embrace the comfort ariſing from that forgiveneſs, and to ſtrive after a grateful truth and obedience. The merits of Chriſt, and eſpecially his death, would be deemed important and be reverenced by a chriſtian of this way of thinking, though he could not convince himſelf that he ought to underſtand literally ſuch expreſſions of ſcripture as, the blood of Chriſt cleanſes us from all ſin, we are reconciled to God through the death of his Son, the Lord took all our ſins upon himſelf, &c. or though he could not conceive that the imputation of the ſins of another, or of the obedience and righteouſneſs of another, taken in a ſtrict ſenſe, accord with the mercifulneſs of God. Such a chriſtian, however, muſt believe that all which Chriſt did and ſuffered was highly meritorious, that all his ſervices to mankind were crowned by his death, that this was a moſt magnanimous ſacrifice, and, in ſhort, that Jeſus did for us every thing that one man could do for another. He would find in the death of Chriſt incitements to the moſt heartfelt gratitude towards him, and to an imitation of his conduct, if his notions of its deſign, utility and neceſſity were ſomewhat like the following. In the firſt place we will ſuppoſe him to believe, on the divine authority, that the Lord of our ſalvation was to be made perfect by ſuffering death; or that Jeſus could not have been our ſuccour, in the moſt extenſive ſenſe in which we need ſuccour, if he had only been born and lived for us, without dying for us alſo. He would find it highly proper that he, who was intended for a pattern to creatures that could only be made happy by ſuffer-

ings, ſhould, as the leader of mortal man, go through ſufferings to dominion, and guide them through the gloomy path of death: a leader, from whom they ſhould learn, with unſhaken reliance on the aſſiſting and ſupporting grace of their heavenly Father, to go through all the toils and afflictions of this life, and to ſubmit to that painful and terrible ſcene which even his beloved Son could not eſcape. He would find it highly meet that Jeſus in his death ſhould exhibit a pattern of thoſe magnanimous ſentiments and virtues, by the imitation of which we might exalt and ennoble an event ſo humiliating to man. Moreover, the death of Jeſus would appear to him a matter highly conducive to his peace and comfort, when connected with his return to life and reſurrection, which ſo quickly followed. It would then be to him the moſt certain proof of the truth of what he ſaid to all who believe in him: *I live, that ye alſo might receive life.* In his opinion our heavenly guide would thus, in his moſt perfect life, and eternal eſſence, have ſhewn his followers what they had to hope and expect. Conſidering how neceſſary the well-founded hope of a happy immortality is to excite and promote chriſtian virtue; conſidering that all other motives would have little or no effect on the human mind, that all muſt ultimately centre in this hope, and receive from it their chief force; he would think the queſtion, why Chriſt ſhould die, ſufficiently reſolved if he knew no other anſwer. It was neceſſary for him to die that he might riſe again; and for him to riſe again, that he might convince, by an actual proof, adapted to their underſtandings, the immenſe number of thoſe who are incapable of being perſuaded of a future ſtate by probable or ſolid arguments; remove all diſtruſt of this moſt beneficial and important truth from the minds of the more thinking; and place the authenticity of his divine miſſion, and the validity of his doctrines, beyond the reach of doubt.

doubt. Probably he would imagine that the death of Jeſus might be conſidered as a natural event, perfectly according with the circumſtances of the times, and the ſtate of the Jews at that period. Conſidering the religious notions and opinions that prevailed amongſt that people, their elders, and men of learning, at the time of Chriſt's coming; he might believe that ſuch a reformer, who combated their deareſt prejudices; ſtripped off the maſk from hypocriſy and ſuperſtition; preached, inſtead of mere outward ceremonies, the worſhipping God in ſpirit and in truth; inſtead of a corrupt and mutilated morality, pure rational virtue; inſtead of a blind religious zeal, and a partial love and benevolence confined to men of the ſame way of thinking, an enlightened zeal for God, and univerſal philanthropy; teaching men, to expect the proper reward of virtue in the internal happineſs reſulting from goodneſs of heart; the ſentiment of acceptance with God, and the nobler pleaſures of a future and better ſtate, inſtead of the temporal and external advantages of this world; and acting in a manner diametrically oppoſite to all their earthly hopes and expectations; could not, without a miraculous interpoſition of Providence, have experienced any other fate than that of Jeſus. Thus, would he conceive, muſt he have been hated, perſecuted, and put to death. Why then, would he aſk, ſhould Providence have prevented, by a miracle, this natural event, when it ſerved to confirm the uprightneſs and truth of Chriſt, whoſe ſufferings and death ſerved to diſplay his excellent and divine character, and place it in the ſtrongeſt and moſt pleaſing light? When beſides, his perſon muſt become more worthy, his moral character more eſtimable, and his merits more important and affecting to mankind, by what he ſuffered as their benefactor and ſaviour; whilſt thus redeemed man muſt be drawn and knitted to him by the ſtrongeſt ties of

gratitude? Muſt not truth, wiſdom and virtue be profited by whatever tended to promote a reverential eſteem, heartfelt gratitude, and lively thankfulneſs for the bloody ſacrifice of our Redeemer? Can we love, admire and adore the moſt perfect pattern of wiſdom and virtue in human nature, not from eſteem merely, but, as he gave his life for us, from gratitude, without being moved to imitate his virtue and goodneſs? Why ſhould Providence have miraculouſly interpoſed to prevent the ſufferings and death of Jeſus, when they could not but excite, in the minds of thoſe who believe in him, an abhorrence of thoſe moral evils which occaſioned them, and from the dominion and conſequences of which nothing but the ſacrifice of himſelf could deliver the ſinful world? Such a chriſtian as we are deſcribing would naturally conclude: a ſtate, from which nothing but the extreme abaſement, and moſt magnanimous ſacrifice of ſo eminently exalted a perſon could emancipate us, muſt have been in the higheſt degree corrupt, perilous, and deſtructive: an evil, that could require ſo dear a remedy, muſt have been a great and moſt deteſtable evil.

Now let theſe notions ſtand or fall by their intrinſic worth. It will be of the higheſt importance, to inquire into their efficacy with reſpect to promoting diligence and zeal in the cauſe of virtue, and an imitation of Chriſt, which is ſo ſtrongly inculcated in ſcripture. To ſhorten this inquiry, let us compare what he has done and ſuffered for the good of mankind, to the endeavours of a magnanimous and benevolent man, who ſeeks to deliver his loſt unhappy brother from the hands of thoſe by whom he has been led to perdition.

Let us ſuppoſe it neceſſary to this purpoſe, not only that the good brother ſhould open the eyes of his ſeduced kinſman to his errors, ſhew him the abyſs into which he had fallen, and into which he would

would plunge ſtill deeper, point out to him the better way in which he ſhould go, and excite him to break his diſgraceful chains; but that his endeavours to deliver this brother ſhould expoſe him to the hatred, malice, and perſecution of his ſeducers, all the effects of whoſe enmity and rancour he muſt undergo; and in ſhort, that he can only ſave his brother at the peril of his own life. If now he reſolve to ſubmit to all this, and ſteadfaſtly purſue his affectionate purpoſe, undeterred by toil, danger, and contumely, what muſt we naturally expect from ſuch an heroic inſtance of unconquerable greatneſs of ſoul? Will not he who is delivered, if he have a lively conception of what his brother has done and ſuffered for him, conſider his former blindneſs and error with more inward ſorrow, ſhame, and repentance, the more it coſt his deliverer? When he reflects that his brother, regardleſs of himſelf, ſacrificed his eaſe and reputation; when he views the ſcars and wounds on his body, the conſequences of his benevolent undertaking; how will the feelings of his mind, that would otherwiſe have remained inſenſible, be awakened! However torpid his ſenſibility might hitherto have been, will he not be moved and excited to the moſt lively gratitude towards his deliverer, to admiration of his benevolent and virtuous diſpoſition, and to a reſolution of purſuing the path to which his brother has brought him back? If we can think this; and if it be difficult to find another way in which a man can be more naturally and certainly excited to good, than this, which engages every moral motive in the cauſe of virtue; the notions of the chriſtian above deſcribed cannot be detrimental to chriſtianity in a practical view, whatever may be thought of them in other reſpects. Under the promiſed acceptance of God, he would perform, incomparably better, his duty to his divine benefactor, the ſeeds of which already exiſted in his

nature. He would think it the more unneceſſary that the univerſally beneficial death of Jeſus ſhould be prevented by a miracle, as permitting it was no injuſtice to him who ſuffered it willingly, and God could fully compenſate all his ſufferings by the moſt glorious reward.

Such perhaps would be the notion of the deſtination of Jeſus, and the deſign and uſe of his ſufferings and death, formed by one who could not reconcile the ſyſtematic opinion of a particular mediation and atonement with his ideas of God, his attributes, his paternal relation to man, the intent of puniſhment in general, and of that of a father in particular. We will not determine, whether ſuch a notion be ſufficiently complete, and compriſe the full meaning of thoſe paſſages which mention the deſtination of Jeſus, and the purpoſe of his death: as it hitherto remains undecided, whether, on account of certain difficulties, we be authorized to reject the literal meaning of ſuch paſſages, and, laying aſide ſome particular modes of expreſſion, confine ourſelves to the general point, that the ſufferings of Chriſt were beneficial to mankind, and a ſource of ſalvation. This, however, I think may be maintained that, with ſuch a notion, defective as it may be, a chriſtian whoſe way of thinking is as we have above deſcribed, may poſſeſs a faith in Chriſt capable of quieting his mind, and amending his heart. He may poſſeſs a faith not derogatory to the fundamental truths of the chriſtian religion: believing that God and the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is alſo the Father of all men; that he has and ſhews paternal ſentiments, purpoſes, and determinations with reſpect to them; and that owing to this paternal love he ſent them his Son, to bring them back to himſelf, to a knowledge of truth, to the love and exerciſe of virtue, and to eternal happineſs: believing that the Son effected this, partly by the information that God

God was their Father in the moſt comprehenſive and conſolatory ſenſe, that he would forgive all paſt diſobedience, if ſucceeded by repentance and obedience, that this obedience conſiſted in the practice of his injunctions and the imitation of his example, that the ceremonial religion of the Jews was aboliſhed, that worſhipping in ſpirit and in truth, or faith made active through love alone was of any avail, and that a ſpiritual, heavenly, and eternal felicity would be the reward and inheritance of his faithful followers; and partly by his whole life, his conduct, his fate, his death and reſurrection, in which he not only confirmed his miſſion in the cleareſt manner, but performed every thing neceſſary to reconcile man to God that man himſelf could not perform, removed every obſtacle which he himſelf could not ſurmount, and by his ſpirit gave them all the excitement, hope, aſſiſtance and ſupport, neceſſary to their following him with truth and ſteadfaſtneſs. I will not preſume to deny that theſe fundamental doctrines of chriſtianity may be farther developed, and more preciſely determined. How they are diſplayed in theological ſyſtems, according to different confeſſions of faith, is well known to every learned reader. But let me obſerve, my deſign is only to illuſtrate my text by a few remarks, not to write a ſyſtem of theology. I ſhall now, therefore, return to our author and examine how the idea of faith here given may be reconciled with what he ſays on the ſubject.

In the firſt place: *faith is the means through which we ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* If, by faith in Chriſt, we underſtand an active efficacious confidence in him, according to the relation in which he has revealed himſelf to us, ſo that this faith is the ground of our amendment, as well as of our aſſurance; a faith in him, not only as the meſſenger of God's forgiveneſs, but as a mediator, and a guide to

the actual enjoyment of it: nothing can be more ſuitable to man's nature, or conducive to the end, than God's deſign of bringing man to eternal life through faith in Chriſt.

Secondly: *By means of faith in him our ſins will be forgiven, and the puniſhment of them will be averted.* This forgiveneſs is actually his work, either as he effects it with God for us, in the proper ſenſe, and reconciles him to man, or as he gives us an aſſurance of the divine forgiveneſs, and renders us capable of enjoying it; and our faith, this active truſt in him, is, on our ſide, the mean by which we become partakers of the divine beneficence.

Thirdly: *Faith in Chriſt the righteous will ſupply the place of that righteouſneſs, and ſinleſs perfection, to which we cannot attain.* It may be ſaid of the chriſtian's faith in Jeſus, that it ſupplies the place of perfect righteouſneſs, in the ſame ſenſe, and with as much juſtice as we might ſay of an infant, that all his duties and virtues conſiſt in an obedient confidence in his wiſer and affectionate parents, and in ſubmiſſion to their neceſſary and ſalutary guidance. The more perfect the child's confidence in its parents and their inſtructions, and the chriſtian's in Chriſt and his precepts, the better each fulfils his duty, is obedient and virtuous.

Fourthly: *Yet this faith doth not make void the law, but eſtabliſhes it.* This our author ſeems to advance as a limitation. But according to the idea I have given of faith it requires no ſuch limitation, no caution againſt its abuſe. For our faith muſt be thoroughly active, ſince the ultimate end of Chriſt's coming into the world was to make us good and happy. As little neceſſary was it to obſerve that *a mere aſſurance, or ſtrong perſuaſion of a man's own ſalvation, is neither a condition, nor a pledge of it.* For this aſſurance is not an active faith in Jeſus, our

our guide. In fact, I have no confidence in a guide, who could and would conduct me to the desired place, if it be not active, or if it do not impel me to follow him. An assurance or persuasion that he could conduct me rightly, however strong it may be, or however I may intend to honour him by it; or the idea, however lively, that he has already led me to the place, though I have not yet taken a single step; is mere self-deception, and not that confidence which I ought to have in him. On the contrary, such a confidence is by no means inconsistent with the doubt whether I be diligent, active, and indefatigable in following my guide, or whether my confidence be sufficiently efficacious. Thus it is very possible that a christian may have a saving faith, an efficacious trust in Jesus, without an absolute assurance of his being in a state of grace. This doubt, however, can only consist in a man's objecting to himself that he is not sufficiently diligent and zealous in his faith, and in the love and practice of what is good. Hence it is obvious, that a christian, who demonstrates his faith by imitating Jesus, has little cause to doubt of his being in a state of grace, because he has not such lively feelings of love towards Christ, and joy in him, as he might wish. He who truly and indefatigably follows his guide, may rest assured that he will be led right by him, and that he possesses the necessary confidence in him, though he may wish this confidence accompanied with more joyfulness and with more lively sentiments of love and gratitude.

Fifthly: *The advantage of faith is, that, by its means, the righteousness and death of Christ will save us from our sins.* If this be consistent with the foregoing, faith in Christ the righteous, who has given himself for us, not only comforts, but saves us: that is, we must believe Christ was righteous for us, not

to

to impart to us his righteouſneſs, but to recommend righteouſneſs to us in the moſt powerful manner, to deter us from ſin, to diſplay to us the odiouſneſs of its form, &c. When all that he did and ſuffered is conſidered in this way, particularly in a moral view, we are actually ſaved from our ſins, through faith in his righteouſneſs and death. How they have made this poſſible in general may be left undetermined. It is ſufficient that all parties admit that our faith actually muſt do ſo, inaſmuch as we are thereby placed in a ſituation to attain our imperfect righteouſneſs, or to be as good, and as obedient to God as is poſſible in the preſent ſtate of things. Our author farther places the advantage of faith in this, that *it is propoſed by the ſcriptures as the means appointed by God for rendering imperfect righteouſneſs equivalent, in his ſight, to perfect; and even of transforming it into perfect.* Where God perceives in man the active principle of obedience, and the elements of righteouſneſs, that is, faith in our preſent ſtate, he ſees the inevitable good conſequences which will extend to all eternity. So far is true faith, in his ſight, equivalent to perfect righteouſneſs; as it contains the principle, ſeed, and origin of it. Its conſequences will ſtill continue to increaſe and extend themſelves. Thus virtue, proceeding from faith, and founded on the infallible knowledge and juſt direction of God, muſt ever be growing more perfect; eſpecially as faith tends to increaſe and rectify our practical judgment, and to bring both it, and the will joined with it, more nearly to coincide with the judgment and will of God. The more this happens, the more are we capable of loving and doing, from our own knowledge, that good which we had hitherto loved and practiſed from confidence in God; and our advancement towards perfection will be more ſpeedy, and our propenſity to virtue more

firm

firm and unalterable, when we no longer walk by faith, but by ſight.

Sixthly: *Faith improves righteouſneſs, and again every degree of righteouſneſs is a proportional preparative for faith; and, if it do not produce faith, will end in ſelf-righteouſneſs, and ſatanical pride.* That faith improves righteouſneſs is obvious, as, in want of practical knowledge, the knowledge of God made ours by faith, not only improves righteouſneſs and religious virtue, but produces them. But as faith moves and excites us to follow the divine precepts; in proportion as we practiſe the obedience excited by faith, we ſhall experience, and feel an inward conviction, how neceſſary and advantageous it is to us to have ſuch an active confidence in God. If, however, we be not more diſpoſed to faith by ſuch experience, and more ſtrongly moved to truſt in God, and give ourſelves up to his direction; we cannot acknowledge him to be a good and truſty leader: we muſt fall into ſelf-righteouſneſs; oppoſe our judgment to his; imagine that we are capable of directing ourſelves; rebel againſt his will; and, with ſatanical pride, ſeek to be independant of him.

PROP. XCV. p. 426.

General Reflections on the final Happineſs of Mankind.

Our author, in his endeavour to prove the probability of the final happineſs of all mankind from the ſcriptures, notices the moſt important paſſages that tend to ſupport his argument. Avoiding a ſimilar inquiry into particular texts of ſcripture, I ſhall content myſelf with adding ſome general remarks on the ſubject; preſerving the ſame impartiality, as when,

when, in an addition to a former propoſition, I exhibited the arguments that might be deduced from reaſon both for and againſt the ultimate happineſs of all men, without offering any deciſion of my own.

I ſhall firſt obſerve that particular paſſages of ſcripture appear abſolutely to favour the common opinion of the total rejection, and endleſs miſery, of thoſe who leave this world unbelieving and unamended; and that theſe paſſages appear to be more weighty, as well as more numerous, than thoſe which favour the oppoſite opinion. Thus whilſt both ſides reſt their proof on particular paſſages, the advocates of the common opinion have ſome advantage over their opponents, and the latter can act only on the defenſive, ſeeking to ward off the blows that they cannot return. On the other hand, if the diſputants add to their inquiry into particular paſſages, the conſideration of the general purport of the chriſtian revelation, the ſcriptural repreſentations of the univerſal benevolence and paternal love of God, the deſign of our redemption by Chriſt, &c; or if the ſtrength of the expreſſions be brought to the teſt of reaſon, by it to be confirmed or ſoftened; the oppoſers of that opinion will have the vantage ground. Probably the queſtion might ultimately be decided in their favour, if they could prove that the general purport of revelation, and the fundamental notions it gives of God, his attributes, deſigns, and relation to man, muſt avail more than particular paſſages, in reconciling contradictions not eaſy to be removed. In this caſe, the paternal relation of God to man, which is the foundation of all chriſtianity, would ſeem a ſufficient ground for rejecting the ſtrict literal ſenſe of paſſages militating againſt it, and ſacrificing them to the general purport of the ſcripture. God promiſes, would the defender of the final happineſs of all men ſay to himſelf, to ſhew infinitely more

mercy,

mercy, patience, grace, and forgiveneſs to man, than the moſt affectionate father can ever ſhew to his child. How can I reconcile this paternal love and mercy with the threats of eternal puniſhment, and total rejection? Can I ſuppoſe that ſuch a father as God declares himſelf to be to mankind, will allow his ſon, who is all his life-time under his eye, and the influence of his paternal authority, not a few years, but at moſt a few days of probation; his good or bad conduct during which is to decide the whole of his future fate, which depends on his father? Can I imagine that he has ſo limited to the ſhorteſt period his ſon's poſſibility and capability of meriting his father's love and reward, or hatred and puniſhment, and in a certain meaſure his whole moral nature, that beyond it no change of his heart to good or bad can follow, or, if it did, could produce no alteration in his fate? Can I believe that a wiſe father would thus permit the total happineſs or miſery of his ſon to depend on a ſingle trial, or at moſt a few?

This caſe is not drawn too unlike, or is it an unapt compariſon. For what is the life of man, conſidered as a ſtate of probation, when compared with an eternity, in which no farther trial takes place, and no alteration can be made, but his diſpoſition, conduct and fate are immutably fixed? Probably the advocate of final happineſs will avail himſelf of this circumſtance too in the compariſon, that, to make every thing equal in both caſes, ignorant, unthinking, inexperienced childhood muſt be conſidered as the time of probation, our earthly life being but the beginning and infancy of our exiſtence. Beſides, in comparing the two caſes, he would find this much harder, that in the latter there is no determinate time of probation, no certain number of years on which the ſon may ſafely reckon, where at leaſt he would have opportunity for repeated trials.

But

But unqueſtionably the hardeſt of all would be, when the father irrevocably rejects his ſon on the firſt failure, without giving him a chance for repairing it, or behaving himſelf better: and we frequently find the young and thoughtleſs ſinner ſuddenly taken off in his firſt crime. To this indeed it may be replied that the father, who has made this ſtrict determination with reſpect to his ſon's fate, is free from reproach, as he had already given his ſon warning: the latter, therefore, knowing he had a rigid father, ſhould have been more cautious; if he were not, he can blame nothing but his own imprudence. But it may be anſwered, though I muſt leave the inconſiderate ſon to his fate, as the fruits of his own folly, I perceive no love, kindneſs or mercy in the father's conduct to his raſh, but unhappy ſon. If I cannot fully juſtify the ſon's conduct, this does not juſtify the ſtrict reſolve of the father, according to human notions. The ignorance, inexperience, and giddineſs of youth, are at leaſt ſome excuſe for the former: but what ſoftening circumſtances can be advanced in juſtifying the rigour of the latter? If it be ſaid that a paternal love, incompatible with ſuch ſevere reſolves, is not that true paternal love which God bears his rational creatures, and which is ſuitable to his nature, but human frailty and imperfection: this is cutting the knot, inſtead of untying it: and it may be ſaid that what is conſidered as human, and unſuitable to God, in this idea, is the eſſence of paternal love, which ſeeks the happineſs of its object as much and as long as poſſible. If this be taken away, nothing more remains of God's paternal love to man; regarded as ſo affectionate, and we are totally deprived of all ideas of it; or rather it is changed into its oppoſite, according to that analogy by which alone we are able to form any conception of this, as well as of the other attributes of God.

They

They who have endeavoured to reconcile the threats of eternal punishment, that cannot well be denied, with the goodness and paternal love of God, by supposing that these threats will not be carried into execution to the utmost rigour of the words by which they are expressed; but that God has a right, like human legislators, to mitigate the severity of his punishments according to circumstances; did not consider that this supposition is a disparagement to God's truth, and consequently weakens the grounds on which our trust in his word must be built. It will avail them nothing to make a distinction betwixt threats and promises; and to maintain that these must be certain and determinate, but that those may be altered by the subsequent resolves of God. Neither can the comparison of human legislators or magistrates hold here; as severer threats than they could, or would fulfil, would procure no true and durable advantage, either in government or education, but rather be prejudicial: they would frequently give occasion to impunity; and it always denotes weakness, or want of power, when a man threatens more than he can, or will perform. Besides, when we speak of the execution of human laws, we in some measure know and foresee the principles and maxims according to which, in the distribution of punishment, they will be mitigated, or put in force with the utmost rigour. The circumstances under which this rigour or mitigation will take place being known, he who violates the law can still foresee his fate with some probability. All this, however, is inapplicable to the threats of God. Were we once to admit that the intent of them is not equally strict with the expression, and that a mitigation of them may be expected, we are in a dangerous uncertainty. Not perceiving the fundamental laws of God's moral government of his rational creatures, and not sufficiently

ently knowing his manner of action, we ſhould be ignorant of the principles on which we might judge what in theſe threats was properly true, in what degree they would be carried into execution, and whether they would in general take place. This uncertainty would greatly favour the hope of abſolute impunity, with which the wicked are too prone to flatter themſelves: at leaſt it would much weaken the impreſſion of the threats of puniſhment, and conſequently militate againſt the end for which they were deſigned.

Though we cannot eaſily admit this ſoftening explanation of the threats of eternal puniſhment, ſtill it may be aſked, whether we may not ſuppoſe that theſe threats, which are expreſſed in an unconditional and unlimited manner, are to be underſtood in a conditional and limited ſenſe, without doing violence to the words, and without ſapping the foundations of God's truth. It may be ſuppoſed that eternal puniſhments are threatened to ſin and ſinners; that is, to the former as long as it is practiſed, as long as it exiſts; to the latter ſo far as they are ſinners, or ſo far as they continue to offend againſt the deſigns and ordinances of their Creator. If the divine threats may be underſtood with this limitation, or, in the language of the ſchools, *reduplicative*, it would not follow that puniſhment muſt endure to all eternity, if, in ſome portion of eternity, ſin could ceaſe, and be annihilated, and the ſinner be ſome time converted. It may be ſaid, they relate to ſin, and preſume its actual exiſtence. They concern the ſinner ſo far as he is a ſinner. If, then, he ceaſe to be ſo, it would ſeem that his puniſhment muſt alſo ceaſe. There are parallel modes of expreſſion in ſcripture, that appear to favour this interpretation. When, for inſtance, it is ſaid: *whoſoever is born of God ſinneth not*, 1 John v. 18. we muſt underſtand this limitation: ſo long, and

and ſo far, as he is born of God. For he might ceaſe to be ſo, and then he would certainly ſin. What ſhould hinder our underſtanding the ſcriptural expreſſion concerning the wicked: *the wrath of God remaineth on him*, and other ſimilar ones, with the limitation that they remain objects of God's wrath as long as they are wicked. St. Paul declares, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, that neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, &c. ſhall inherit the kingdom of God. This is unqueſtionably to be underſtood in a conditional ſenſe, that the wicked, ſo far as they are ſo, and whilſt they continue in ſin, ſhall be excluded from the kingdom of God. But they are not denied the hope of being converted from their ſins, and then becoming happy partakers in Chriſt's kingdom. The Bible, however, affords us a paſſage ſtill more to the point, which ſeems fully to juſtify this mode of interpretation. The prophet Jonah is commiſſioned from God to tell the corrupt Ninevites that their city will be deſtroyed in forty days. This was an unconditional threat, and no hope was given the Ninevites, that their repentance would avert the threatened puniſhment. This may be concluded from the ſilence of the prophet, who, in delivering his meſſage, mentions not a word of any mitigation of the rigour of the ſentence being to be expected from their amendment. But were not this ſufficient to make us ſuppoſe the threat unconditional, we cannot doubt it, when we conſider how diſſatisfied the prophet was, becauſe the threat announced by him was not executed. Could he have been diſſatisfied, if his threat had been couched in ſuch terms as to give the Ninevites room to hope that their repentance would ſave them from its execution, or if he had underſtood it in that ſenſe? Had this been the caſe, he could not poſſibly have imagined, that the ſuppreſſion of the puniſhment of the Ninevites, after they had repented, could lead them to conſider him

as a lying prophet; nor could he poſſibly have been angry at God's remitting the threatened puniſhment, which he had promiſed to remit on their repentance. Beſides, the leſſon which God gave the diſcontented prophet, when he attempted to juſtify his anger, muſt have been couched in very different terms: inſtead of pointing out to the prophet his pity, and ſo juſtifying his ſparing the Ninevites, he needed only have mentioned his injuſtice, in requiring of God what he had not promiſed, and demanding the execution of a threat expreſsly contrary to its conditions. Whether the Ninevites were juſtified in expecting the performance of God's threat only on condition that they did not turn from their ways, and how far they had grounds for hoping that their ſincere repentance would avert the intended puniſhment, are only to be determined by the event, and by God's anſwer to Jonah. Both teach us that, in ſimilar caſes, we may expect every thing from the mercy of God, and that his threats may be conditionally underſtood, when they are unconditionally expreſſed.

If it be aſked, why theſe threats were thus unconditionally ſpoken, and why this condition was not clearly expreſſed in words, it may probably be anſwered: an unconditional threat may make a deeper impreſſion on the mind of a ſinner, excite a terror that will be the more efficacious for being united with doubt and anxiety, and thus produce a more earneſt repentance, in thoſe who require for their amendment a ſtrong ſenſe of fear and terror. Probably the denunciation of the prophet Jonah would not ſo powerfully have excited the Ninevites to repentance, had the hope of pardon been clearly announced to them, ſo that they could have had no doubt of it. It is not difficult to perceive that the threats of eternal miſery, uttered in the ſcriptures againſt ſin and ſinners, are moſt ſuitably and efficaciouſly expreſſed in

in an unconditional manner. The inſtructions given us in the ſcripture are confined to the teaching us, how we muſt lead our lives here, to ſecure happineſs hereafter. They extend not to a future life: they tell us not how we muſt conduct ourſelves in it: they only aſſure us that we ſhall be in it what we are fitted for by our conduct in the preſent, and that it will be a ſtate of the moſt juſt and adequate retribution of the works we perform, and the diſpoſition we cultivate here. They teach us, that he who oppoſes the order and purpoſes of his wiſe and benevolent Creator will be the object of puniſhment and wretchedneſs, and that an oppoſition to the ordinances of God will be attended with eternal miſery.

To make the impreſſion of theſe inſtructions more forcible, the ſcripture tells us that the future ſtate of retribution will be the more perfect, in that it will be devoid of every thing which moderates and alloys the undiſturbed enjoyment and perfect reward of good, and the natural conſequences and puniſhment of evil in this life. In that kingdom of truth and order every one will be exactly what he ought to be, the virtuous happy, the wicked miſerable, without any commixture of circumſtances tending to weaken the proper fate of each. Thus much the ſcripture teaches us concerning our future ſtate: and this appears to me all that it was neceſſary or proper to teach us. The queſtions, however, whether the good may there become worſe, or the wicked better; and what alterations the deſtiny of either would, in that caſe, undergo; on which, according to this ſtate of the caſe, bottoms the whole doctrine of the future fate of the bleſſed, and of the damned, it leaves to be anſwered by philoſophy.

It does not agree with my plan, fully to examine what philoſophy gives us reaſon, with ſome probability, to expect. As however it only permits us to conclude from analogy, it will only allow of the three

following propoſitions: either the ſtate of every man in a future life is irreverſibly fixed, ſo that, with reſpect to the developement of his mental faculties, his morality and perfection admit not of any advancement or decline: or ſome men advance without being able to decline, whilſt others decline without being able to advance: or both declenſion and advancement may take place in one and the ſame man.

The firſt is repugnant to that mutability eſſential to man, and to all created beings in general; according to which, it cannot be impoſſible for them, though they may be unable to acquire new ideas, to aſſociate their former ones in a new manner. From their nature, as long as they are left to themſelves, all intelligent creatures muſt approach that perfection to which they tend, or they muſt recede from it. If they remain invariably ſtill, it can only be owing to an extraordinary effect of divine omnipotence, by which both the virtue of the good, and the wickedneſs of the bad, after having attained a certain point, are brought to an eternal ſtand. If this be taken for granted with reſpect to the wicked, and it be attempted to prove from it the eternity of their puniſhment, it appears to me reaſoning in a circle. For the ſuppoſition of eternal puniſhment is founded on the eternal perverſeneſs of the wicked: and this eternal perverſeneſs is not deduced from the nature of their minds, but from a determination of God, by which they are compelled to it, that they might ſuffer eternal puniſhment, as the good are compelled to remain in their virtue, that they may be capable of eternal reward.

Whether the ſecond propoſition be admiſſible, or not, will depend chiefly on the anſwer to the following queſtion: does the debaſement or decline of the wicked apply to their underſtanding, as well as their will; or is it to be ſuppoſed that the underſtanding continues to improve, whilſt the will is eternally

nally growing worſe? He that aſſerts the latter, will appeal, perhaps, to the example of thoſe wicked people who may be extremely depraved in heart, notwithſtanding their knowledge of their duty, and what is truly for their advantage; and all to whom *video meliora proboque, deteriora ſequor* may be applied. He will ſay, puniſhment, particularly when ſevere, long-continued, and inceſſant, hardens rather than bends the mind; and as the deſpair of the ſinner is augmented, his perverſeneſs, and propenſity to evil, will increaſe. To this it may be anſwered: when a man remains a ſlave to vice, in ſpite of his better judgment, he is chained to it by habit, and the force of bodily aptitude; the practice of it gives him more pleaſure and ſatisfaction than the omitting it; he has ſtill an opportunity of ſinning; and he has the power of increaſing and confirming the habit and aptitude, which chained him to vice, by repetition of it. In ſhort, vice, though he muſt repent of it, is not ſufficiently hateful to him; or he does not conſider the natural or poſitive puniſhments that follow his miſconduct, as conſequences ſo inſeparable from it that there are no hopes of avoiding them, or at leaſt mitigating their effects, without abſtaining from ſin. Juſt too as we may ſuppoſe his judgment to be in what is really for his advantage, this judgment is not conſtant in him, but relaxes as the ſenſe of his puniſhment abates; when the much ſtronger perception of the overbalance of pleaſure promiſed him by ſin returns, and again exerciſes its tyrannic ſway. But this, according to the propoſition, cannot be the ſtate and diſpoſition of him who is condemned to eternal miſery. He will no longer poſſeſs this ſinful body, and if the influence of bodily aptitude be not totally annihilated with it, it will unqueſtionably be much diminiſhed. The perfect retribution which will follow in the next world will require a privation of objects and opportunities for

ſinning. For the wicked muſt there be pained by the privation of thoſe things, their immoderate indulgence in which conſtituted their crimes. A vicious propenſity, it is true, may not be gradually weakened, and ultimately deſtroyed, by the mere privation of objects and opportunities for ſinning, if the ſmalleſt hope remain that theſe objects and opportunities may again return. But if the propenſity be totally deprived of its object, and of all hope of ever obtaining it; and if the ſinner perceive that the future ſatisfaction of it is utterly impoſſible; this forcible privation, and this known impoſſibility, will finally overcome this propenſity, be it ever ſo ſtrong. Beſides, in this ſtate the ſinner could no longer deceive himſelf, or ſhut his eyes to the real cauſe of his miſery: wanting thoſe amuſements and diverſions with which he formerly kept at bay the ſtinging reproofs of conſcience, the painful voice of truth will ſtrike deep and loud on his inmoſt ſoul. Sin ſtripped of all its charms will inceſſantly appear before him in its native uglineſs, unable longer to promiſe him any compenſation; and he muſt perceive in it the ſole cauſe of all his wretchedneſs and torment.

To maintain that between the underſtanding and will of the wicked there is ſuch a gap, that the knowledge and judgment of the former do not determine the reſolves of the latter; we muſt deny that they are thus puniſhed in eternity, and made miſerable with the moſt juſt retribution; or mitigate and lower their pains to that reſiſtible and tolerable degree which they may attain in this world. On the contrary, the more juſt, adequate and ſtrong we ſuppoſe the puniſhment of the wicked to be, the more aſſuredly muſt they know that their ſufferings are abſolutely founded on their deviations from the laws of truth and virtue; the more clearly will their underſtanding perceive their true intereſt; and the more

more ſtrong and effectual muſt be their hatred to their former errors. Should not this follow, but their wills continue to grow more depraved, their perceptions of good and evil muſt grow more erroneous, and their underſtanding more darkened. Now it may be aſked, whether a ſtate of decline can continue to eternity, ſo that the light of reaſon may conſtantly diminiſh, without being ultimately extinguiſhed. This queſtion experience, in my opinion, anſwers in the negative. We know a ſtate from which we are emerged, in which all the perceptions of our minds were confuſed and obſcure, and we had no clear conſciouſneſs of our being, or our perſonality. Thus a ſpirit that ſhould continue to decay would ſoon loſe itſelf in this ſtate of inſenſibility, would ſoon ceaſe to be a thinking ſubſtance, and would be what man was before his birth. As we know no point in the aſcending ſcale to which the human underſtanding cannot riſe, though we know a point in the deſcending, below which it cannot fall without loſing its perſonality, its conſcioúſneſs, its individuality of being, this objection, will not apply to an ever continuing improvement.

If it be ſaid, according to the third propoſition, that every man, good or bad, happy or unhappy, may both advance and decline in perfection; this would be perfectly conſonant to the preſent frame of man's nature, and what mere analogy leads us to expect in that period which man has to go through. Such is the ſtate in which we find ourſelves here. But that, being a ſtate of moſt perfect retribution, muſt, in all appearance, eminently promote an advancement to perfection.*

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* We cannot here avoid recommending to our reader the ſtory of Carazan, the merchant of Bagdad, in the Adventurer, which, though a fiction, has an air of probability, and is true to nature.

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, a future life is not only repeſented as a ſtate of retribution, but the effect of that retri-

I do not conſider the ſubject as exhauſted, or the queſtion decided, by theſe deſultory remarks: my ſole aim was to point out ſome conſiderations, which appear to me of weight in this inquiry, and which probably deſerve to be more narrowly inveſtigated and compared. This I ſhall leave to the more experienced mind, whilſt I endeavour to remove, if poſſible, one difficulty, which too naturally riſes to the view to be paſſed over in ſilence.

It may be ſaid, if the author of the ſcriptures had good and ſufficient reaſons not directly to anſwer the queſtion, whether the wicked can be amended by the puniſhments of the Almighty in the next world, or not; and if he have left the deciſion of it to philoſophy: in undertaking to anſwer the queſtion, and anſwering it in the affirmative, philoſophy would render nugatory the purpoſes for which God left us in the dark; deſtroy the neceſſary and ſalutary influence which the ignorance and uncertainty of mankind on this point would have on their minds; and, if it ſhould ſucceed in giving a full and ſatisfactory anſwer, only diſcover a pernicious truth.

If this objection be made, ſtill it muſt be underſtood that philoſophy, in anſwering the queſtion in the affirmative, does not contradict the ſcriptures. Though we agree concerning the intent of the ſilence of ſcripture, we may yet aſk: will this always hold good in every ſtate of mankind, to whatever degree of knowledge they may arrive, whatever may be

bution is probably ſhadowed out in the ſentiments expreſſed by the former. The ſinner, when in the torments of hell, perceived, no doubt, that the pain he ſuffered was a juſt reward of the abuſe he had made of his poſſeſſions, in his voluptuous and ſelfiſh life. Unqueſtionably he now abhorred and execrated his former blindneſs and vice; and could he have returned to his father's houſe, he would probably have obeyed that warning, which, from a noble and diſintereſted anxiety for the delivery of his ſtill living brothers, he wiſhed to have communicated to them, in the moſt effectual manner.

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their way of thinking, and whatever may be the ſtate of their morals? Or is the ignorance of the philoſophical ſolution, or the common belief of the contrary opinion, adapted only to a certain conſtitution, or a determinate ſtate of man, and uſeful in that only, but prejudicial under a change of circumſtances? It may be aſked farther, whether, notwithſtanding the anſwer of philoſophy, the ſilence of the ſcriptures may not produce its intended effects, and procure all the advantages deſired. There may be a period, and there may be circumſtances, under which the greater part of mankind are ill fitted to bear the light of philoſophy; when they would not give themſelves any concern about a nice deciſion of this queſtion, or would admit the common opinion of the impoſſibility of converſion in a future ſtate, and the collateral doctrine of eternal puniſhment, as rational, without finding in it any thing offenſive; and when they could only abuſe the contrary opinion to their detriment. With reſpect to ſuch a period, and ſuch circumſtances, would it not be advantageous that the ſcripture ſhould obſerve ſtrict ſilence reſpecting the change men might undergo in another world? But again there may be times and circumſtances, in which the diſcovery of the poſſibility of a future change might relatively produce more good than harm: when maintaining the contrary might, perhaps, be to thinking men a moſt inſurmountable obſtacle to their belief of divine revelation; an obſtacle which they could not reconcile with the attributes and nature of God, with the appearance of his works, or even with the general tenor of the ſcriptures: and when the unthinking majority of chriſtians themſelves would be little more affected and deterred by the doctrine of eternal puniſhment; nay, when the abuſe of it would but lull them into greater ſecurity. Can it militate againſt the deſign of God that a hitherto miſtaken truth, probably concealed from mankind

mankind for their good, ſhould be ſtripped of its veil, when circumſtances are ſo altered that ignorance of it would be more prejudicial than advantageous? It is difficult to maintain that the diſcovery of a truth, or the detection of a prejudice, will have the ſame influence at all times, and under all circumſtances. Neither can we abſolutely aſſert that concluſions to which we may be led by reaſon, if they diſcover to us truths which God did not think fit to reveal to us in the ſcriptures, are contrary to the deſigns of God, or render them nugatory. Much more ſuitable both to philoſophy and religion would it be to ſuppoſe that Providence, which orders every thing for the general good, watches over the cultivation and progreſs of truth amongſt mortals with ſuch wiſdom, that it promotes or retards its diſcovery in proportion to the wants of the age; that no rightly demonſtrated truth can be injurious upon the whole, or tend to corrupt the world; that light and darkneſs are diſtributed throughout the moral world according to wiſe and benevolent laws; and that both are neceſſary to the accompliſhment of the grand ſcheme of Providence, however incapable we may be of perceiving it in every particular inſtance.

Perhaps the following conſiderations may alſo tend to remove the objection. The greater part of thoſe who are not philoſophers enough to anſwer this queſtion in a ſatisfactory manner, on rational principles, but truſt to the deciſion of others, without examining it for themſelves, would probably be inclined to abuſe it, whilſt unable to ſee the truth in its whole extent, and with all its conſequences. Theſe would be led by the ſilence of the ſcriptures to a neceſſary and beneficial diffidence of themſelves, and a truſt in the judgment of others, which would prevent their abuſing it: but, had the ſcriptures explained it clearly, this could not have happened. They who are capable of demonſtrating to themſelves

ſelves the poſſibility of a future converſion, with more or leſs probability, muſt, ſo far as they reaſon on true and juſt grounds, diſcover this truth; that a long continued courſe of vice will render their diſcontinuance of it and amendment more difficult, their pains and chaſtiſements more ſevere and laſting, the purifying fire ſtronger, and their miſery more extreme: a truth that cannot but act as an antidote to the abuſe. They muſt alſo learn that their amendment can never be completed without making a beginning; and that this completion is not the buſineſs of a moment; not the inevitable conſequence of a wonderful conjunction of particularly favourable circumſtances; not the cataſtrophe of a tragedy or romance; but that it requires an earneſt and ſteadfaſt exertion, if a man would learn to govern himſelf; to ſubject his inclinations and deſires to reaſon; to make them accord with the will of his Creator, which tends to the happineſs of all; to love God above all things, and his neighbour as himſelf; to obtain a predominant taſte for truth, order, and perfection; and to find pleaſure in happineſs wherever it may be. They muſt know that peace, content and happineſs are to be taſted in that kingdom of truth and order, only in proportion as their minds are habituated to theſe, and approach perfection. They muſt alſo be conſcious that every ſin cheriſhes and comfirms the propenſity to evil, and conſequently the diſorder and depravity of their minds; that every injury to another increaſes the meaſure that is to be filled out to themſelves; and that both the general good and their own require this, that when, on account of their unrighteouſneſs, they are condemned to be impriſoned in hell, they ſhall not be releaſed till they have paid the uttermoſt farthing, or received full retribution.—He who knows all this, or who believes the doctrine of a future retribution in the whole of its philoſophical and ſcriptural extent, is in no

no danger of being ſeduced into ſpiritual indolence and ſecurity by the hope of a future converſion.

If then the anſwer of philoſophy can be ſupported, the fear of its having diſcovered a dangerous truth, or of its abuſe being more general and diſadvantageous than the abuſe of the oppoſite opinion, appears to be unfounded. For who can deny that men by whom every thing is abuſed, may alſo abuſe this, and miſapply the doctrine of eternal puniſhment, or at leaſt render it ineffectual? It may drive them to deſpair. It gives religion a gloomy aſpect, deprives it of its pleaſing form, and ſeems more adapted to make the Deity terrible to us, than an object of love. Beſides the majority of mankind are incapable of forming a clear, determinate, and effectual idea of eternal puniſhment. The expreſſion is too abſtract, not ſenſible, not concrete enough to affect the minds of ſuch men, who cannot conceive abſtract expreſſions otherwiſe than by applying them to particular caſes. Tell ſuch a man that he ſhall remain a very long time in priſon, he will be much leſs affected, than if a certain number of years were mentioned. The expreſſion, *eternal puniſhment*, will convey to him no idea; or he will imagine it to repreſent a certain number of years, ſo that the proper idea of eternity, at which he cannot arrive, will be loſt to him, or at leaſt will make no impreſſion on his mind which a determinate number of years would not have done with equal force and certainty. Let us, however, ſuppoſe that he can form a juſt idea of eternal duration, probably one of the two following conſequences would enſue. His religion, if it did not make him totally abandon it, and fall into practical atheiſm, would be chiefly ſuperſtition; conſiſting more in fear and terror, than love and confidence in God: or he would ſeek to leſſen his burdenſome fear and diſquiet by the hope that the number of the damned, amongſt believing chriſtians at leaſt, muſt

muſt be extremely ſmall; that a man, baptized in the name of Chriſt, could not draw upon himſelf damnation but by an eminently wicked life, or the moſt deteſtable religious errors; and that, if he were not worſe than the majority, or guilty of immediately offending God, and of crying injuſtice againſt his neighbour, but took care to avoid crimes forbidden by the law, he ſhould eſcape eternal puniſhment, and conſequently all puniſhment, as he knows no other.

As every one believes that there is a certain proportion betwixt crimes and their puniſhment, both in degree and duration; it is very natural, that he who is conſcious of no immediate offence to God, or no irreparable injury to his neighbour; and can only reproach himſelf with a very common degree of thoughtleſſneſs, a too great ſenſuality, a propenſity to the pleaſures and enjoyments of this world, a careleſs and free life, &c. ſhould conſider eternal puniſhment as too diſproportionate to the ſum of his guilt for him to fear it; or not to hope being ſecured from it by an adherence to the worſhip of the church to which he belongs, a right faith, and an obſervance of the ceremonies of religion. This, it may be preſumed, in all likelihood, would not be the caſe, and the great number of mere nominal chriſtians would be leſs apt to flatter themſelves with the hope of impunity, if they were deprived of the ſpecious pretext, and ſecret foundation of this hope; namely, the perceived or imagined diſproportion betwixt their ſins and eternal puniſhment. They would probably be awakened to a more earneſt reflection on their future fate; every the leaſt act diſapproved by their conſcience would become more important, and more powerfully excite in them diligence to do good; were they clearly convinced that every virtuous ſentiment which they nouriſhed by good works, would promote their happineſs

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in eternity; and every wicked inclination, which they cheriſhed by acquieſcence, would promote their unhappineſs, in exact proportion; that every good deed would there meet a ſuitable reward, and every bad one an adequate puniſhment; and that they would experience good or evil, as long as they ſhould merit it. Men would then have their own natural ſentiments of right and wrong; and the judge in their own breaſts would confirm the ſentence announced to them: but now the threats of hell ſuggeſt to many that eternal miſery is too ſevere a puniſhment for the indulgence of a few years, and thoſe intermingled with ſo much ſorrow and vexation. The effects of the Popiſh doctrine of purgatory ſeem to make this conjecture in ſome degree probable. If this doctrine were delivered in a pure and rational manner, diveſted of ſuperſtitious notions, and the gainful additions foiſted into it by prieſtcraft; it would be found to be the ſame at bottom; or to teach that a proportional retribution is the mean of purifying us from bad thoughts and actions, and that when we are thus purified we may hope for a releaſement from pain. But the great object of fear in the Romiſh church is not ſo much eternal fire, as that purifying flame. Purgatory is the rein that curbs ſo many unruly deſires, and the ſpur to ſo many, at leaſt outwardly, good works. The certain hope of releaſe does not ſo diminiſh the fear of it, but it occaſions many reſtitutions accompanied with much ſelf-denial, many abaſing retractions, many humiliating confeſſions, and many expiations that coſt dear to ſelf-love; particularly on the bed of death: of all which, alas! our church offers us but few examples. How much greater and more numerous effects of this kind may we preſume would be produced, had not maſſes for the dead, legacies in favour of the prieſthood, pious foundations, and ſimilar ſuccedaneums for actual reſtitutions,

tions, and reparations of injuries, been invented by ſelf-intereſt, and ſwallowed by ſuperſtition!

But ſuppoſing it could be proved that the fire of hell is a purifying fire, would it be adviſable to advance this, and directly to maintain it, in mixed ſocieties? This queſtion, I believe, I have weighty reaſons for anſwering in the negative. Our ſocieties, at leaſt the greater part of them, may not be ſufficiently prepared for the reception, and right application of this doctrine. In my opinion, that preacher takes the ſafeſt way, who, in his public diſcourſes on this ſubject, goes no farther than revelation itſelf, the words of which he undertakes to explain and enforce. It behoveth him not to diſpel that wiſe and ſalutary darkneſs, with which ſcripture has enveloped the future fate of mankind; as he cannot tell whether the greater part of his hearers be not in the ſame circumſtances as the Ninevites at the preaching of Jonah; or whether ignorance, or at leaſt uncertainty be not neceſſary, to awaken them to more ſerious reflection, and to a more lively and effectual repentance. To this another reaſon for caution may be added. Hitherto the torments of hell have ever been repreſented as eternal. Our auditors are ſo accuſtomed to this notion, that they have aſſociated the idea of eternity with that of hell-torments in ſuch a manner as to conſider it an eſſential part of them. Many unthinking men, therefore, hearing that it is not impoſſible for them to be converted in eternity, and that probably in ſome period of it their torments would ceaſe, might imagine that the pains of hell themſelves may likewiſe be annihilated, or at leaſt no longer figure them of ſufficient weight to be affected by them: in the ſame manner as a man who is accuſtomed to ſee, and to ſuffer, ſevere puniſhment, little heeds a milder chaſtiſement, though it would be ſenſible and efficacious enough of itſelf, and in other circumſtances;

ſtances; or, as a man who has borne a very heavy burden, when a lighter is placed on his ſhoulders, is inſenſible of the load.

But if it be admitted on the other hand, that the ſcriptures do not clearly aſſert the impoſſibility of a converſion and alteration in eternity; we muſt go no farther on that ſide than they do, and at leaſt avoid making it a point of our public duty to demonſtrate it to be impoſſible. Would it not be moſt adviſable, to treat this ſubject with the ſame caution, and to paſs it over for the ſame reaſons, as a prudent and conſcientious preacher would treat cautiouſly, and perhaps totally paſs over the ſimilar point, of the poſſibility of a death-bed converſion. If a man content himſelf with ſaying that ſcripture gives us no hope of this kind in expreſs words; would not his preaching be true and effectual, whilſt he carefully enforces the clear threats of eternal puniſhment in the ſcriptures, denounced againſt thoſe who obey not God; and endeavours to inculcate as urgently as poſſible, that the longer a man continues in diſobedience the more he will enhance his miſery, and the more difficult he will make the alteration of his mind, and that as long as a man defers to make a beginning and waits for a more convenient or favourable opportunity, he has actually reaſon to fear an eternal or irreverſible miſery?—Still I preſume not to decide any thing on this point. All I have ſaid on the ſubject is merely hypothetical, and I am prepared to embrace any ſyſtem that may appear to reſt on more ſolid foundations.

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